mute

DIGITALARTCRITIQUE

London's Art and Technology Newspaper — WINTER 1994 — Free

Taking the Alien Exam

by Rob La Frenais

Some descriptions:

"In the 1950's ITT developed sensor technology that could literally display what a person was thinking. It was essentially a mind-reading-machine. It operated on the principle of picking up the electro-magnetic functions of human beings and translating those into an understandable form. It consisted of a chair in which a person would sit. Coils, which served as sensors, were placed around the chair – there were also three receivers, six channels and a Cray 1 computer which would display what was on a person's mind, digitally on screen. A lot of hard work and a lot more computer crunching got things to the point where the computer could print out a dialogue. This would be a dialogue of what the person was thinking. More work got it to where the person would visualise something and a picture would actually appear on the computer monitor.....which was used to decode the transmissions being generated from the person in the chair, was then interfaced with an IBM 360 computer. This was, in turn, interfaced with the Montauk transmitter....A psychic would then sit in the chair in Southampton (Long Island) and relay via computer to the Montauk transmitter. The psychic would think thoughts, and the Cray 1 would decode them, they'd be put on a 32 bit radio link and sent to Montauk where they would go on to the IBM 360. The IBM computer would then broadcast it out of the transmitter and could build a thought form of what the psychic was thinking in Southampton. The device was essentially a mind amplifier......

In his mind the psychic would concentrate on a solid object and it would appear somewhere on the base. Whatever he would visualise, the transmitter would transmit the lattice (or matrix) for, and build enough power to materialise whatever he was thinking of. Every single point, so where he could witness to a single spot on the base, that spot an object would materialise. In other words, if he would hold an object in his hand and/or visualise it, it would appear at the given spot. They had actually discovered pure creation out of thought with the use of the transmitter."

"A group of sleepers lie half-embedded in a shale-heap in the English countryside. They are attached to neurosynchronisers tuned to delta rhythms. They have inverted their sleep patterns so that day becomes night, night becomes day. An attendant occasionally sends signals to them via a transcutaneous electrical stimulator. They have learned codes in their waking moments so that there is a direct interface between the waking and the sleeping. Like communicating with the dead, another human boundary is transgressed. The TENS unit also stimulates awareness of lucid dreaming at moments of high REM activity. Later, they may set themselves special group activities, tasks to complete, destinations to visit to be undertaken collectively in the 'dream' landscape. They are observed by the inhabitants of a town from a clock-tower through a telescope."

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The Immateriality of the Signifier The Flesh and the Innocence of Michael Jackson

By Suhail Malik

(Preliminary note: the following piece was read on several occasions, perhaps most publicly at the 'Virtual Futures' Conference held at the University of Warwick in May 1994. It has not been modified here and it therefore still bears the marks imposed by that genre of presentation (in the use of the pronomial, for example).

This article abandons at least one of the questions that this issue of Mute tries to address, namely whether art can survive the Twentieth Century, in favour of another question which is perhaps less secure, perhaps not so quickly available to a polemic whose positions could be distributed according to what 'art', or the 'Twentieth Century', or even 'survival' are said to be and what sense any of these terms are said to have here, today: a question which perhaps attempts only to invoke whatever instability may be possible in just these terms (and some others, not least 'technique' and 'world' and 'today') thereby remaining useless to any position in the dispute over art's 'survival'; a question, namely, as to whether the Twentieth Century – whatever that is – can survive (the) art(s).

Such survival – of (a) time – matters 'today', matters now, precisely because the notion of a continuation or a change or even an end to art 'today', indicating an art or arts or an anti-art out of or beyond the Twentieth Century, seems inextricably tied to a technology – of the image and of sound – that is itself 'new'. But this is itself nothing new: in just this way it could be asked if the Nineteenth Century could survive the inventions of photography and sound recording on the one hand and Cezanne and jazz on the other (and is any one invention less a matter of 'technique' than an other?); and – to short-circuit an enormous argument – that the word that the Ancient Greeks had for art (where the 'West' is sometimes said to have been born) was only just techn. Which century, which time, then, is art, are the arts, and the anti-arts (there are no non-arts), in today? And where? Especially if 'today', 'now', that where and when can not be removed from the time of technique, 'our' time, the end of the Twentieth Century (at least). Does that mean an exacerbating materialisation or immaterialistion of fabrication and of figure, of silences and of blanks? Which is why –)

I want to talk to you about Michael Jackson. Because Michael Jackson is innocent.

I'm not making any claims here about Michael Jackson's legal status (though, since the allegations you'll all be familiar with have yet – if ever – to be heard in court, he remains innocent as far as that's concerned). And I'm not making any claims about what Michael Jackson may or may not have done or continues to do, whether or not he carressed, fondled or 'orally copulated' and masturbated Jordan Chandler (Independent 15/09/94, 14), the 13-year old around whom the allegations centred. What I hope to talk about is what's up for grabs in all of these allegations, defences and anxieties around Michael Jackson: namely, innocence. Michael Jackson is innocent – because what Michael Jackson wants and wanted, and had, more than anything else, even, now, in the company of children (boys, but what does this matter?), is innocence itself. And, just that far, Michael Jackson is more innocent than ever before, more innocent than any child.

* * *

In her essay A Cyborg Manifesto [cited here from Body/Politics, ed. Mary Jacobus et.al., Routledge, 1990], Donna Haraway introduces and lays out many of the themes that have come to dominate the central concerns of, and discussion around, what is now known as 'Cyberpunk'. I'm going to adopt Haraway's quasi-definition of what's at stake here: 'A cyborg', she says,

> is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. Social reality is lived social relations, our most important political construction, a world-changing fiction. (149, emph.add.)

I'll carry on with the rest of this paragraph, but with a greater hesitance: some of what Haraway goes on to say here I'll be taking issue with implicitly. She continues:

> the international women's movements have constructed 'women's experience', as well as uncovered

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C@C Computer Aided Curating

by Eva Grubinger

Contemporary art is reflecting the many questions arising in our current culture. It has been fundamentally altered through the development of new transport and communication media. We now have a totally different world view. Distances count for nothing as an increasingly comprehensive communication network weaves itself around a seemingly shrinking globe. Messages that were previously limited to a physical carrier can now travel on virtual journeys. The immaterialisation process developing in telematic culture raises questions which are of particular interest to younger artists. Themes, techniques and aesthethic strategies are changing.



C@C INTERFACE ON WWW

C@C is a newly developed system concerned with the production, presentation, documentation and distribution of contemporary art in electronic networks.

The graphic interface of C@C makes it possible for even the most untrained user to climb on board the Data Network. The C@C-Navigator enables the visitor to view the created Information-works while understanding the relation between the participating artists. In the Public Discussion Area the visitor has the opportunity to take part in the ongoing discourse about a specific piece and in the Business Class the work can be acquired. With the help of a specially developed C@C Editorial system, artists can construct complex works without any previous knowledge of programming.

One of the tasks of C@C, as a forerunner in this new sphere, is to research and further develop the traditional relationship between art and the public.

C@C will go on-line on the 26th November, and this will be marked in the Berlin gallery EIGEN+ART when the work of the first three users will be presented. The Austrian-based artist Christine Meierhofer (chrissie@thing.or.at) is reinstating the value of the daily practice of sampling (ie. the use of foreign material). Meierhofer presents a selection of masterpieces stolen from public collections. Through her work Commission Theft she invites commissions where the collector can order an exact replica of how the stolen masterpiece would fit within their home. Meierhofer work refers to the heated discussion about the relationship between the public and the private domain which culminated in the Clipper chip debate.

Through a classically artistic discipline, sculpture, Kon Wium Lie (howcome@dxcern.cern.ch) refers to the ecological and economical principle of production of C@C. Objects are manufactured only on demand. Like DNA, the abstract

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A body like Adonis

Tuesday (Arms/Chest)
Awoke feeling a little fatigued from yesterday's leg work. Took 1 multi-vit 1000mg tab, 1 biochromium, 2 amino tabs and did some stretches.

Breakfast : .75 litre of Maximus weight gain,
1 bowl of Bran flakes with half a banana
2 whole grain toasts with reduced sugar peanut butter

Gym 10.am.
Met up with Rick and decided to get straight on with bicep work, low rep/high weight routine. Bar-curls 2x10 + 2x8 with a 10lb increase, preacher curls 3 x 12 (both arms), Triceps pull downs (taking Rick's advice of slow release and maximum intensity pump at stretch) 3x12, Overpulley's 4x12, general grip and forearm work till lunch.

Lunch : **2 breasts of skinless steamed chicken**
Greens and steamed veg (unlimited)
1 large jacket potato
4oz cottage cheese with 1 banana
French bread and Wieder vitamin enriched Shake

Took 1 amino with Dibencozide, [illegible] 100mg, 4x100mg chairlized anabolic enhancers.
Then slept from 2 till 3 before having energy snack before the afternoon's chest work.

Energy snack:
1 pt raw juice : Banana, 2 orange, peach, apple, mineral water
1 can of Wieder pre-workout vascu drink
1 rice cake with honey.

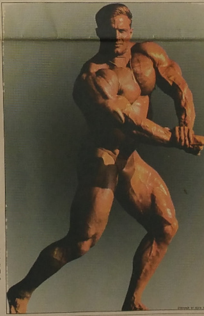
Gym 4.30pm
After warm ups straight on to bench press 4 x 12 reps followed by flat flyers 5 x 10 reps.(Really burning chest.) Then Pec Deck and frontal lifts.

Dinner: **14 oz. steak**
Large bowl of pasta with tomato sauce
Large bowl of green salad with low fat dressing
2 scoops of ice-cream

Came home feeling great and felt I had made real progress, but after about half an hour I got very depressed and felt kind of unsatisfied with life, I thought I must be lacking something so I took some supplements and read health mags until eight - Craig Titus - Classic Californian Colossus (I've still a lot to learn.) Watched a couple of videos (Lostboys and Brewster's Millions, quite good).Looking forward to tomorrows back, shoulder and abb work.

Supper: **Tuna and sweetcorn sandwich with yogurt**
Mug of hot choc made with semi-skimmed milk

Weighed 215 pounds at bed time (bulked).



Editorial

The Daily Universal Register, Jan 3 1785:

To the Public.

To bring out a New Paper at the prefent day, when fo many others are already aftablifhed and confirmed in the public opinion, is certainly an arduous undertaking, and no one can be more fully aware of its difficulties than I am: I, nevertheless, entertain very fanguine hopes, that the nature of the plan on which this paper will be conducted, will enfure it a moderate fhare at leaft of public favour.

Themed to examine the effects computer networks will have on art, this issue of mute asks: "Can art survive the 20th century?" It has become more an examination of the relationship between human beings and technology than with art.

Simon Worthington & Pauline van Mourik Broekman

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Turins Contract

By Sheep T. Iconoclast

I want to talk about the new media collision. You might have noticed a number of barriers coming down recently, apartheid in South Africa (well the laws at least), the Berlin wall, the iron curtain. For me, my barriers started to come down when clean war techniques were being practised during the Gulf war. It was the first war to be run via shooting schedule. Even for the American air combatants it was close to star wars, films, and video games, and only fractionally linked to the naive slaughter we call war. The potential walls between war and television had certainly been blurred (in the best possible taste).

It can be hardly insignificant, then, that the arts have seen a similar collision between techniques which have generally gone under the appropriated title of 'multimedia', but I think this reflects a general linkage between many areas inside and outside art. The electronic digital calculating device has been, if not a surrogate mother to this collision then probably a gene donor.

The convergence of digital media has brought previously seperated domains within reach of each other. This is partly due to the general deskilling the user interface software brings to the process of manipulation. However, I cannot help but think that there is also a larger convergence going on.

Recently, the Time-Warner media empire was purchased by its largest media maker Sony. The business logic behind this was clear, by having a ready supply of view-ware, the final inhibitors to the rapid introduction of new technology were removed.

The tyranny of the bit store has bought a common domain, a playground in which artists and technologists have a method for re-engineering what Benjamin Woolly refers to as 'Hyperreality', the reality in our heads.

Previously you made a 'film', you made a 'record' the identifi-

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EARTH WIRE

.... Bruce Gilchrist



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@ Home Mediamatic Conference

4, 5, 6 November

Amsterdam

By Simon Worthington & Pauline van Mourik Broekman



The second Doors Of Perception conference '@Home', organised by the Dutch Design Institute and the ever-active techno-culture magazine 'Mediamatic', took the notion of the home as its central theme. Looking at the design challenges of multi-media and computer aided systems and environments, the conference this year focused on domestic space and the very flexible notion of 'home'. It therefore didn't need to regulate itself solely to the network homesteaders and cybergurus, who made sure the audience were duly informed about the merits of living a nomadic existence with solely an e-mail address, portable phone and powerbook to their name. Architects were also invited to address the very complex question of what home is and how it comes into being. Apart from a few 'ooops' moments (crucial CD-rom concept courtesy of Mediamatic editor Willem Velthoven, the all important 'step back') where yet another delegate felt the burning need to talk about his/her children, this led to a diverse series of papers where, above all, the importance of the integration of virtual and real was stressed.

A few speakers, including John Perry Barlow, Electronic Frontier Foundation member and lyricist for the Grateful Dead, David Chaum, the Managing Director of DigiCash in Amsterdam (a firm pioneering electronic cash payment systems) and Manuel de Landa, computer artist and author of 'War in the age of Intelligent Machines', were invited to discuss the social and economic implications of Saturday morning's announcement of the successful initiation of the 'Digicash' scheme and the release of 1.000.000 'cyberbucks'– seen alternatively as the anonymous method of payment which will succeed in making cyberspace and its digital economy a properly functioning system or that which will enable the most crooked crooks to succeed at tax evasion, and also endanger the lives of law-abiding citizens through undetectable terrorist campaigns.

Although perhaps not so clearly connected to the conference, Manuel de Landa's paper concerning models for artificial intelligence was very interesting, not only in relation to the construction of intelligent architectures within cyberspace, but also in relation to the Digicash announcement. Speaking about systems and models for artificial intelligence, de Landa asserted the importance of our observation of and modelling from emergent systems (bottom-up) instead of hierarchical ones (top-down). Using primarily his friends, the birds, not ants this time, he described the development of knowledge not so much as slow storage and data-retrieval (as in - bird maps whole surrounding area and bases its actions on that comprehensive knowledge), but as a dynamic integration of knowledge gained from simple 'affordance' tests, which are acted upon (as in - bird tests each surface for affordance it gives, using its whole body as cognitive device) accordingly depending on the kind of 'affordance/resistance' that surface or object has lent it. Seemingly basic, this model - if applied to systems of economics and knowledge enables you to rest assured that, no matter how misguided efforts of certain individuals have been, that it will all find its natural balance - in the end. Somebody said, cynically,

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The Immateriality of the Signifier The Flesh and the Innocence of Michael Jackson

By Suhail Malik

> or discovered this crucial collective object.

- - That is without doubt. -

> This experience is a fiction and fact of the most crucial, political kind. Liberation rests on the construction of the consciousness....The cyborg is a matter of fiction and lived experience that changes what counts as women's experience in the late twentieth century. This is a struggle over life and death, but the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion.
> (ibid., emph.add.)

I'll quickly outline Haraway's argument about the 'processes' of 'social reality' in the 'informatics of domination' that is the 'integrated circuit' of society today, 'coded', she says, 'by C3I command-control-communication-intelligence' - the planning strategy center of the US military. The model of domination and control Haraway is talking about above is one aspect of the 'technological apparatus'. Let's move on and pick out a second strand from Haraway's essay which will allow a return to this apparautus and its dispersion (if, that is, that apparatus isn't just that dispersion), and Michael Jackson, namely the 'three crucial boundary breakdowns' that are, for her, the logic of the cyborg. If it is a logic.

* * *

What are these three 'boundary breakdowns'? Firstly, 'the boundary between the human and the animal is thoroughly breached'; the second 'leaky distinction' is 'between animal-human (organism) and machine'; thirdly, the 'boundary between physical and non-physical is very imprecise for us' (150-153). Everything here is to do with borders, boundaries and their establishment. And this, as Donna Haraway recognises very well, is because the cyborg is just a border that is not yet properly in place and what happens there; you, me, politics.

Let me pass quickly over these border skirmishes.

Of the border between the animal and the human she says:

> Biology and evolutionary theory over the last two centuries have simultaneously produced modern organisms as objects of knowledge re-etched in ideological struggle or professional disputes between life and social science.... Biological-determinist ideology is only one position opened up in the scientific culture for arguing the meanings of human animality. (152)

What does this mean? Simply that the person - man - is studied in the life sciences, at least, alongside every other animal and in much the same way. (This has usually meant the cutting to bits, incarceration or close-up study of both - either microscopically or environmentally - a recurrent theme in the work of Sterling and Gibson.) But the "much the same way" is important here. There are still marked and important distinctions between the study and use of animals and persons (not least when it comes to consumption, eating and what, on humans, would pass for torture).

But there's also another side of this argument which Haraway points to when she argues that

> many people no longer feel the need for [the] separation [between human and animal]; indeed, many branches of feminist culture affirm the pleasure of connection of human and other living creatures. Movements for animal rights are not irrational denials of human uniqueness; they are a clear sighted recognition of connection across the discredited breach of nature and culture.... There is much room for radical political people to contest the meanings of the breached boundary. The cyborg appears in myth precisely where the boundary between human and animal is transgressed. (152)

(Haraway goes on to comment that '[b]estiality has a new status in this cycle of marriage exchange'.)

Who, then, in our public culture, in our mediatised and cultural currency, who could or would be a more 'radical person' than Michael Jackson in his most intimate relation or connection with Bubbles, his chimp and good friend? And it is not just one animal that Michael Jackson spends his time with; the stories and reports of his menagerie - true or not - are well known enough to confirm the point. I'll cite a report from about ten days after the Michael Jackson child-molestation story first broke, when Jackson could no longer afford to be seen as he always had been with an accompanying child, just after he had been brain scanned following his cancelled concerts in Singapore:

> Two adult and four young orang-utans were brought to Michael Jackson's Singapore hotel room yesterday where the singer entertained them at the poolside.
>
> (Independent 03/09/93, 13 (1st edn.))

Who, then, in this new and breached relation between human and animal, could be more 'transgressively' cyborg in turning his back on the company and companionship of his fellow humans for the animals? Grizzly Adams, perhaps, and all the other 'Return to Nature' brigade (you'd want to include here the anti-culturist 'Crusty', together with the dominant primitivistic liberatory aspects of Rave - rather than clubbing - codes). But these are precisely the most naive and inept responses to the boundary as boundary (they simply confirm that boundary, simply or merely changing sides - and consequently always failing to work it at all). And these responses (or Donna Haraway) can not even begin to touch the actual transformation of Michael Jackson into animal form (panther) at the end of one of his videos. Things are more complicated with Michael Jackson.

* * *

Not least because he occupies and breaches the other two 'leaky boundaries' as well (and not only them), defying all stabilisation, defying, that is, all desire (for it). Recall that the second unstable and disordered boundary was that between organism and machine. Haraway states that

> the certainty of what counts as nature - a source of insight and promise of innocence - is undermined, probably fatally.
> (152-53, emph.add.)

Let's extend the boundary to that between the organic and the non-organic and intersect it with the border between the natural and the non-natural; as does, for example, Michael Jackson in the multiple transmorgifications during many of his videos; transmorgifications that are again the actualisation of the breaching of this border - but that this is possible and, in some sense at least, acceptable is what is of interest here (be it taken as deranged).

And even if Michael Jackson is the most public and contemporary manifestation of this troubled border, he is not alone. On the one hand, the entire Cyberpunk genre from Bladerunner on has written, filmed and discussed little else: from Gibson's fetishistic Mona Lisa to Arnie as half-humanoid-half-machine (but which half?), the constant stress has been on the compatability and encroachment of the prosthetic device on the body, on the brain, on memory and so on.

They are the anxieties in the face of a cyborg future, Michael Jackson.

•

The massive transfiguring of Michael Jackson is not merely restricted to these two borders, it also steps around Haraway's third 'imprecision', that of the material and the immaterial. A leaching of visibility and tactility that is most explicitly shown in the video for Do You Remember from the Dangerous album where Michael Jackson constantly appears and disappears in several different guises, but also appears and disappears tout court.

Again, I want to suggest that there is also another level at which Michael Jackson's materiality/immateriality allows for the phenomenon that he has become and will continue to be. This level of immateriality is that which in fact allows Michael Jackson to be quite the star he is - because, as Haraway points out in effect, he is cyborg.

> Our best machines are made of sunshine; they are all light and clean because they are nothing but signals, electromagnetic waves, a section of spectrum, and these machines are eminently portable, mobile - a matter of immense human pain in Detroit and Singapore

- with Michael Jackson, no less a matter of some pleasure. -

People are nowhere so fluid, being both material and opaque.

Cyborgs are ether, quintessence.

It's this last point I want to stick with and which, I think, presents the greatest difficulty in talking about Michael Jackson, because it allows us to ask this question: what is the consistency of Michael Jackson? That is, if Michael Jackson is not simply a person because he is also the infraction of the border between the human and the animal, betwen the organic and the non-organic (which is also to say between the living and the dead - see the Thriller video) between the material and the purely communicative ethereal manifestation that takes place in no one place as such and, because of this, takes place everywhere; if, that is, Michael Jackson is neither merely animal nor human, merely living nor merely dead, merely material nor merely signal and both animal and human, living and dead, material and signal; if Michael Jackson is a configuration of a stew which is, or wanted so badly to be, also neither merely male nor female, man nor woman and both male and female, and similarly for the separations between black/white, child/adult, victim/aggressor, innocent/profane, public/private, real/fictional, human/non-human (whatever it may be to be human) and so on; what then does Michael Jackson consist of, what consistency and manifestation can he have (or not have, in so far as he makes sense)? It seems that it isn't a matter here of a clearly demarcated cyborg manifesto, but a much messier and depthless cyborg manifest-stew.

Michael Jackson's own articulation of this business (if it matters) is straightforward; he wants to be like a child. Which is why he resorts to the company of animals ('they're just like children' he says to Oprah), why his sexuality has yet to be, and it (still) has to be, fathomed out, his gender had to be determined (his speaking voice indeterminable), his race unimportant (and it's certain that he's the last person to whom it matters if you're black or white). He becomes the person that straddles all these divisions and categories that the world and its politics are made up of, that lead to wars and conflict, laws and legislation, violence and states, desire and disorder.

In short, Michael Jackson is the humanist end-point, the freeest of all restrictions specified by the markings of the political body (in both senses) and he achieves this by the most advanced technological apparatus available. And this basic human freedom is, for him and for what are called 'our times', supposed to be childhood, the dispersion of a body that, to be the body it tries to be, can not be held together as such, that takes place everywhere and nowhere. (Which is why there is not even one Michael Jackson). A humanist end-point, that is, that seems to be the complete evacuation of the human (into the machinic, the animalistic, the immaterial). This is why the police examination of Michael Jackson's genitals and lower body parts, a search made to confirm Jordan Chandler's description of Michael Jackson's penis (which could be taken, publically, as a police examination to see if Michael Jackson has a penis), why this examination - that he has a body to be examined - was said by Michael Jackson himself to be 'dehumanising' (Independent 23/12/93,1).

Nothing can touch Michael Jackson, it's certain. For he does not exist for real. If he exists (for himself, above all) and if his global, political and ideological success, the anxiety and fascination that surrounds him, can be indicated, it might be through what he offers (to us, for himself): an escape to an innocence in childhood that has been lost, a childhood that, as he tells Oprah, 'he never had'.

And, now, has no more. For what was lost in the Michael Jackson 'affair' was Michael

Inventing a Future for Art

By Michael Worthington

In the last two years interactive work has been coming out of art schools and colleges but only in the last six months has it began to be seen as a long term medium and not just a trendy catchphrase á la "cyberspace", "hypermedia" et al. It has begun to make an impact on the design business and also the public conciousness. Multimedia, the Net and Future-tech are fast becoming mainstream news. A side effect of this media onslaught in favour of the future is the glut of small press rearguard action magazines that have recenly sprouted. Covering a multitude of subjects their common ground is that they seem to be fuelled by a fear of the future. This is traditionally true of the designer but not always of the artist — surely the ability to openly employ irony and comic elements make the new media more open to exploitation by fine artists? Besides shouldn't we all be embracing the new infant technology and helping it to grow? And irony is a necessary postmodern lesson to be learnt.

Already people have set themselves up as multimedia experts often on the evidence of little output or understanding of the medium, let alone any theoretical questioning of exactly how and what they are doing (there are notable exceptions such as Brenda Laurel). There is indeed very little work that satisfies the theoretical or creative criteria that exists in fine art/design critique. As design guru Mr Keedy says 'To be an authority you just need to be first'. At present first is not necessarily enough.

It is inevitable that interactive media will become a mainstream medium for communication and entertainment, and will develop its own visual conventions and constraints — its own language will be ready for use as parody and message carrier by the art world. However it seems at the moment this language is being decided upon by designers and programmers, and its vast potential rarely considered by artists. Multimedia offers incredible scope for conceptual pieces, a chance to fuse a myriad of mediums experimented with in art since the 20s — sound, moving image, performance — so is this reluctance to take up the virtual gauntlet another example of technophobia?

What must be understood is that multimedia doesn't mean the death of art or the book or any other "craft" (craft itself is merely a description of an outdated form of art-making). Radio didn't kill books, TV didn't kill radio: what it did do was to alter their function. Where would the art world be (still in realism?) if the camera



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hadn't been invented and forced the use of the concept and communication techniques in art?

The technology that is currently cutting edge will rapidly become outdated and just another dull corporate implement, leading to a number of alterior possibilities, particularly a stimulating underground. Right now you can buy a writable CD player and create your own CDs for very little money and distribute them yourself. The next step is that soon you will be able to send complex digital works across the net, for access by thousands of people around the globe – the virtual gallery will become reality. The virtual gallery will exist in time but not in actual space. Everyone will be able to exhibit in a gallery that is infinite. Also the introduction of artwork onto the net makes the artist completely anonymous – what gender, race, age is the artist? You can enter into any role you wish, the individual is empowered to pose as anyone they wish to be. Will this facet of the future render irrelevant the current themes in art such as the body, and gender/sexuality issues by hiding the identity of the artist?

The downside of the virtual gallery may well be that the experiential side of art is removed, at least until the net's virtuality becomes so real as to be indistinguishable from reality and eventually becomes hyperreal – considered more real than reality.

It seems that with science fact as well as science fiction there are optimistic and pessimistic viewpoints. On the optimistic side, the new media means personal agendas and opinions become more readily available for exposure to a larger audience, the pessimistic side is a Big Brother style network of censorship and control. Whatever the outcome of the new media, artists and designers should be looking to the future seeing what can be done, not what is being done now, as Alan Kay so precisely states 'The only way to predict the future is to invent it.'

As this future is being invented it is clear that many things will be different, the rules of modernism, postmodernism, classicism etc and their advocates will not be changed overnight. It is, however, clear that communication and the means of communication to the masses, will change radically especially with the advent of interactive and online TV. Art will undoubtedly become involved in this, art should encompass all fields of popular life after all. But how will art tackle the new ground?

In recent years much conceptual work and communication art has employed the visual language of design and advertising. Will the way the art world tackles multimedia rely on how designers tackle multimedia? As a designer having crossed over into multimedia one thing of interest to me is how typography will change – at present the main means of communication, in tandem with the image. It seems to me that, in multimedia, typography as a communicator becomes obsolete–no-one wants to read from a screen–instead type will become more textural than textual, in short anything longer than a flash message will be communicated with sound, leaving the realm of typography to be used as either image or not used at all. The most important development of this may be the responsibility re-placed on the image. Artists working with multimedia should be precise and accurate in their choice of image because the typographic language used to communicate in certain art (eg Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger) is destined to become more ambiguous. Type will be used as backgroud image for ambience and atmosphere – its secondary signifiers already established from a print tradition. Similar issues will also be raised by the use of video and sound, likewise the way they are read will already be established from current styles and genres.

Of course type will still have a role for information storage and retrieval but in terms of art, not design, its creative role will change. In the same way that photography reinventd painting by challenging its role as the prime carrier of realism, so shifting it and forcing it to become another kind of art altogether, so multimedia will also force new issues: a change in environment; the importance of role playing and gaming; a change in the medium; a new audience (at home, leisure based); a new gallery (the modern gallery will not exist in real life, nor will it be a virtual gallery resembling a physical one instead it will be truely interactive and exist with new works of art created for that medium, piped into people's homes); all these elements will have to be considered if art is to survive technology. The gallery experience itself will be challenged and re-assessed. It may currently exist as an imitation/simulation but it will soon shift to something new, specific to the medium.

What remains to be seen is whether artists will follow the visual language being set up by designers or whether they will create their own, and whether they will participate in the creation of new types of work for the new medium or merely use the existing visual language for their own means.

THE END

Turins Contract

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cation of material with content was complete. By digitising this material you convert diverse and orthogonal media into a common format. A rough digital equivalent of Henry Ford's "you can have any colour you like as long as it is black or white". Following the new politics when digital, a work becomes completely mutable and re-editable. Pop too has started to explore/exploit the new general synthesis. Bands no longer make music and performances, they make videos, dance pieces and now, with people like The Residents, Peter Gabriel, David Bowie and the 'man formally known as Prince' they too are constructing
multimedia. Even the National Galleryl has been drawn into to writing one of the best pieces of multimedia, the National Gallery CD-ROM/Microlab. Comics have been a potent source of imagery to be fed into to the New General Collision.

By Ram raiding the image house and appropriating it's contents, the first street recycling shot produced a have of sampled house and hip hop. With a language which has itself been cut-up from William Burroughs, the new groove order retrofitted its glaze just in time for the proto-adults who had just spent their youth channel surfing through oblivion. They literally re-edited culture because they had known nothing else.

From this perspective the just juice which made sampling from imitation to appropriation, provided a fertile ground for the next level, after phase one and before collecting any bonus points.

The bit crazed super mundane mantra nerd kings, Chairman Gates and old Joe Steve Jobs had yet more tricks too pull. After selling everyone popcorn they where looking for a film to go with it. No one had got where they where today without filling a disk drive.
The CD-ROM (which itself had been appropriated from audio CD's),

had two appealing facilities.

alt.tech.home. (privacy please)

BY WILLIAM SHOEBRIDGE

'A particularly pernicious myth is that with the dramatic and on-going revolution in computer technology we (always that nebulous 'we' presumed to mean anglocentricly - based western culture) are entering a fundamentally new 'information age'........... The dramatically increased information processing spawned by computers simply processes old ways of doing things much more efficiently. This is hardly the defining characteristic of an information age.[1]

We could start, maybe, by saying that it is unfortunate that any enquiry into the ramifications of contemporary technology and the relationship it has to an individual's interaction with it, is always accompanied by the same rhetorical excitement and hype that is responsible for initiating such a prolific landscape of high technology in the first place. Put another way, the capitalist hyper-narratives prompting the necessity for such a technology and it's usage in contemporary life are mimicked by the theoreticians and activists responsible for evaluating its meanings and implications. The language of the salesperson is the language of those in the position of interpreting culture. Is it possible that the same language used to sell this technology and the apparent excitement used to describe and interpret it conceals the blandness of its usage?

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK: On evaluating the extent to which an impending infobahn is about to plough up our daily lives; like many of the debates of the post-modern the home have become the battle ground for the advent of an information and communicative overload.

As '*Desire is not subordinated to procreation or even genitality .... That was it's modernism*'[2], home is not subordinated to shelter that was the home's modernism. The home is closer to a terminal, that is the home's postmodernism.

The arrival of telecommunication networks and modem devices, the personal computer, cable and satellite media systems and the gradual introduction of widespread interactive television viewing has eroded clear distinctions between inside and outside. The home as an enclosure, a shelter, suggests a dissociation with the outside that was only possible before media-time became concurrent with real-time. At any point during 24 hours it is, as we all know, now possible to tap into, telephone or modem images and information around the globe. It could be said that even home life has become a social experience. Doreen Massey equates notions of place and home with social relations:

'Social relations always have a spatial form and a spatial content. They exist necessarily, both in space (e.g. in a locational relation to other social phenomena) and across space. And it is this vast complexity of the interlocking and articulating nets of social relations which is social space.'[3]

Massey's horizontal (spatial) analysis of social relations in city life is in opposition to the linear (temporal) quality of family life in general that is '*simply equated with community, and by that means provide a stable base for identity*'.[4] For the family with its history and decendance, which is its future, the home as shelter extends its enclosing structure to form or inform notions of community. Specific processes associated with the industrial age smashed the coherent nature of family life to pieces, dividing it up across vast distances. If, at this juncture, a cynical departure is taken, it could be said that these notions of 'community' and 'local' disintegrate even further when the home is punctured by the lines which make up the vast communications and entertainment's networks, turning the home into a terminal on entering and exiting in its flow.

However, it is probably more sensible to argue that a sense of community and social solidarity that bound earlier societies broke down with the complex social structure created by industrial influences, but; the advent of computer technology and its relevant nets possibly reverse this process re-informing new notions of community, what Howard Rheingold has called '*communities of interest*' [5] rather than geography. Social interaction within cyberspace communities ringroads the divided nature of 'real life'. 'Netted up', unhindered by boundaries such as 'national' and 'international', scattered family life could possibly rely on this technology for its contact and relation; computer conferencing after all takes place across distances which would prohibit human interaction without the use of modems and the computer screen. Increased mobility whilst communicating on the net is becoming possible because of the shrinking nature of this new, light-weight technology; turning what was crude, but essentially a novel experience (human contact through electronic media) into astoundingly commonplace banality. The experience of mum and dad, could conceivably become then, just a sequence of soundbites and images. A blessing for some no doubt.

The depths to which these encroaching information highways penetrate our home or private lives can best be described by the address of a Usenet 'alternative' newsgroup known as 'asb.' (alt.sex.bondage.). This is technology through the front door, up the stairs and directly into the most intimate of all human arenas, the bedroom. Set up in 1991, 'asb', '*despite its name alt.sex.bondage is not just for people into human macramé, it has become a general hangout for all sorts of sexual adventures*' The stories found are as diverse as its users. Some disguise their identities through the use of a 'remail server'(an address of a computer elsewhere other than your own) who then re-sends messages and stories back onto the net anonymously. Gender within this B.B.S. can be disguised also through the use of pronouns such as '*e, em , eir, eirs, eirself and sie*'. *So that* '*she talks to herself*' *becomes* '*sie talks to eirself*'. '*Sie*' *being a substitute for both 'he' and 'she*'.[6]

Whether it be activist instructions, hackers' information or sexually explicit material the issue of privacy becomes forked. Firstly the notion that the home's 'privacy' is punctured when it, as an enclosing space, opens up to the world on the net, and, secondly on sending or receiving information that is intended for a single receiver. Can we be sure of a future 'privacy' where information sent is not intercepted, screened, censored or removed?

On the issue of this 'privacy', debates rage hard in the U.S. centred on the emergence of software such as P.G.P. and P.G.P. 2.0 (Pretty Good Privacy) which are public key encryption systems, enabling a sender to encode his message to be interpreted by a specific or known receiver. This kind of software has only recently emerged, bypassing U.S government legislation to block the importing and distribution of foreign alternatives to the U.S. government approved key escrow encryption aka. 'Clipper chip'. What the U.S. government National Security Agency (N.S.A.) wants as standard placed in all PCs is the clipper chip, an encryption tool, that unlike its foreign alternatives incorporates a 'back door' allowing access to information by the N.S.A. I assume the N.S.A.s interest in this surveillance of the movement of information stems from the idea that a national threat is only a threat when it becomesinvisible.

The U.S., not only the purveyors of a global culture (it can be argued that there is a link between the availability of American Culture and the global nature of postmodernism), also wants control over the surveillance architecture of the infobahn affecting the civil liberties and privacy of the users of the net. Policing the infobahn raises issues around the specific flows at play in party politics that are having to become increasingly technocratic.

As this century draws to an end and the survival of political democracy becomes ever more critical with the global spread of an essentially right winged agenda, the problems of how to keep democratic spaces of freedom that extend beyond the boundaries of power systems of separate nations also become critical.

It can be said that what the net offers is an escape hatch for the survival of democratic representation and production, and a freedom to express a spectrum of ideas from groups whose small numbers or their 'status' on the periphery prevents their representation by the systems that govern us. Discourse centred on technology and its effects talk of 'now' being the time to democratise the net before the involvement of corporate or governmental power make it impossible to do so. This is idle thinking and rather naive. Corporate and governmental power is already involved in battle, the former over the medium itself, the latter over its surveillance. Initially a 'local' development spawned from the counter-cultural ideologies of the 60s and 70s, technological advances such as the PC has grown up over a relatively short time span into multinational corporations; despite its humble beginnings, this corporate power is nonetheless menacing. What should not be forgotten, however, in the battleground for democracy, is the enormous computer corporations' involvement within the selling of and the usage of the medium itself, their control is in the creation of the necessity for such technology in the first place. Clichés such as 'knowledge is power' turn information, the 'bread and butter' of knowledge into a currency, forcing interest-, pressure- and political groups into passive, consumers of a technology that possibly mollify their effect anyway.

Corporate powers' control, is not the slaying of civil liberties through rigid censorship, we have governments for that, their interest is not the nature and status of your identity, their only interest and control are in the development of the arena in which you interact per se. In other words, corporate powers' involvement in the survival of democracy with the advent of the net and the development of their technology is highly questionable. Technological corporations maintain their control by forcing the individual to interact, to join in, to take part; the threat of course is that, in a future without the relevant hardware, you occupy something of an 'anti-social' position. Pedestrians on the infobahn?

Cyberspace could be seen then, as one of those informal public places enabling people to rebuild aspects of community that were lost when the corner shop became the shopping mall,thus encouraging the expansion of options and possibilities. *Alternatively, perhaps cyberspace isn't quite the right place to look for the rebirth of community, offering not a tool for conviviality but a life-denying simulacrum of real passion and true commitment to one another*, either way we need to find out soon.[7]

William Shoebridge

1.'*The Myth of the Information Age.*' Jim Thomas p.p.1-2 in *Intertek* vol 3.4
2.'*A Thousand Plateus-capitalism & schizophrenia.II*' Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari p.p.154-155
3.'*A Place Called Home*'. Doreen Massey p.12 in *New Formations - A Question of Home*
4. ibid #3 p.8
5.'*The Virtual Communitiy*' Howard Rheingold, see chapter 1
6. See *Wired* magazine 2.06
7. Ibid 5, chapter 1

THE END

Firstly it was big (600Megabytes before compression, or the entire authored novels of the western world before 1840)

CONTINUES ON PAGE 4

Jackson's already fictional innocence. The child he befriended, innocently, corrupted him by mistaking his affection sexually. The child, if a13 year is a child, corrupted Michael Jackson. The child was sexualised and sexualised Michael Jackson (he has a penis: the police have, the polis has, seen it, confirmed it for us). The child, in all innocence, in therapy, was more adult than Michael Jackson. The innocence Michael Jackson wanted (and not only in his bed, 'like a slumber party' (Independent 28/08/93, 1), kissing, the boys report (Independent 27/08/93, 1), '"like you kiss your mother"'), that innocence corrupted Michael Jackson, deprived Michael Jackson of his innocence. Innocence depriving itself of its fiction. And that is the law, its fiction. Michael Jackson, in short, was and remains guilty of his innocence, guilty - innocent - of his fiction (Independent 27/08/93, 27 (Leader)).

In other words, Michael Jackson's escape from the world, from the bind of the law and its poisoning corruption is always and only a fiction, an idea of a childhood and innocence that he wishes for and which has yet to come. And now more than ever. How will he ever 'Heal the World' now?

*

It looks, then, like Michael Jackson's cyborg manifest-stew wants to escape politics and violence, be outside of the law, by becoming child (woman, animal, satellite, white, whatever) a return to a childhood that has never happened (but, recreated, is now) and which will leave him inarticulate, apart from the shouts of sheer pleasure and delight of his music, the pleasure and satisfaction of desire that he gets and gives: in - fans. I'll finish then with two quotes: a long citation from the recent essay 'Prescriptions' by Lyotard (about Kafka's In the Penal Colony), drawing together the threads of materiality, infancy and why Michael Jackson in fact - as with every attempt to escape law, binding and politics - only ever reinscribes that which it attempts to escape; in Michael Jackson's case, a total and totalitarian reinscription of the law as an aesthetics; his corruption (why his body had to fall apart once the allegations were made; his dehydration, his painkiller addiction confession, related to his hair catching fire, his corporeality catching up with him in his dehumanisation); and a second citation from the four minute confession (on 22/12/93, on global tv) in which Jackson admitted all of this. Lyotard:

> to be aesthetically is to be-there, here and now, exposed in space-time and to the space-time of something that touches before any concept and even any representation. This before is not known, obviously, because it is there before we are. It is something like birth and infancy (Latin in-fans) - there before we are. The there in question is called the body. It is not I who am born, who is given birth to. I will be born afterwards, with language, precisely in leaving infancy[.] ... this infancy, this body, this unconscious, remaining there my entire life. When the law comes, with my self and language, it is too late. Things will have already taken a turn, this first touch. Aesthetics has to do with this first touch, which touched me when I was not there....This touch is necessarily a fault as concerns the law. [...] If the law must not only announce itself, but also make itself obeyed, it must vanquish the resistance of this fault or this offending potentiality constituted at birth - by which I mean: deriving from the fact that one is born before being born to the law. For the law, the body is in excess.... But the law must be concerned with this excess of the body. If the law is to execute (itself), it will have to inscribe itself on the body, also like a touch.

Jackson proclaims, just as well, 'that if he was guilty of anything,

> it was of giving all he had to children' (Independent 23/12/93,1) and, quoting directly,

> of believing what God said about children: 'Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not for such is the Kingdom of Heaven'. It is not

- Jackson continues, well aware of his media -

> that I think I am God, but I try to be God-like in my heart.

THE END

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Relais: Destiny of Literature as Epoch of the Post (1751-1913)

Book Review by Esther Leslie

Relais: Geschicke der Literatur als Epoch der Post by Bernhard Siegert (1751-1913) (Published by Brinkmann & Bose, Berlin 1993.)

The book jacket of 'Relais...', sports a picture for a 1920s design for a dual purpose object: a letter box backed by an identical letter bin. Chillingly, this graphic insinuates how close missives always come to being trashed. Bernard Siegert's 'Relais...', a series of theses on postal anxieties, investigates such interferences of communication: the fact that letters might never arrive, that their meanings might remain inaccessible, too encrypted or, that, perhaps, on arrival, letters might dismissevely get binned.

Letters, according to the advertisements, are meant to keep parted people *in touch*. The claim appears innocent. Siegert's book upends this alibi of the post, to reveal other less humane reasons for the postal principle during its162 year-long 'epoch' (1751-1913). For the Enlightenment scholars who oversaw the emergence of the postal system, language is equated with communication, communication with understanding, and understanding with humanity. The hidden agendum of such rationalist assertions is revealed by the author. The 'epoch of the post' is accomplice to the generation of individuals as recipients of letters - postal subjects, subjected in general. Happily for Siegert, key developments in postal technologies, such as the penny post, franking machines, printers, sticky envelopes, are initiated by utilitarian and disciplinarian Rowland Hill (i.e. a perfect subject for the Foucauldian gaze) and his family. Fellow utilitarian and panopticist Jeremy Bentham and early computer inventor, Charles Babbage, also make appearances in mail history, transposing onto postal systems their disciplinary machines, run according to functionalist, rationalist, standardising, abstract principles which increasingly bracket out unaccounted for unpredictabilities.

From 1750 B.C. to the Baroque period letters are instruments of communication solely for royalty, rulers and the military. After this period the postal system becomes institutionalised through the granting of permissions to noble houses and suchlike to carry private letters, fragments of inter-personal communication. British rulers are precocious in the perfection of regulated postal systems. In 1591, in response to an increasing flow of private correspondence, Queen Elizabeth initiates the collusion of Royalty and the Mail, proclaiming that each and every letter must pass through state channels. By the end of the 18th century, a definite 'individualisation of written correspondence occurs' and letters become vehicles of intimacy: the exchange of personal details, autobiographic revelation, declarations of love. The postal principle becomes interminable. In demanding reponses letters demand constant exchange. The epoch of the post creates subjects entwined in networks of communication. The stimulation of inter-personal communication becomes a new type of power brokerage. The engendering of addressees is seen to be synonymous with the manufacture of individual bourgeois subjects. For Siegert, this does not signal the emergence of an authentic communicating individual as subject, but rather signifies an early stage of a highly modern cultural control unit, called man, who mediated a fantasy of individuality through this very act of composing private letters. The letter becomes metaphor for the individual self. Siegert quotes Goethe, to whom and from whom letters were exempt from postage fees, making him the ultimate addressee/addresser. Goethe declares letters the most consummate affidavits. They represent a record of one's most internal feelings, one's biography, one's selfhood. For Siegert such an apparently humanising function is, indeed, just part of the perfecting of oppressive mechanisms. An anecdote exposes fantasies around the generation of senders and recipients and the universalization of the postal system: Harriet Martineau equates the invention of the door slit and cheap pre-paid postage (initially recipients paid for letters) with the aversion of violent revolution, because of their effective encouragement of the circulation of ideas which humanise the masses and engender domestic affections. Once telegraphic technology is available, in Britain post-Peterloo, its potential is shown to lie in a very real organisation of power: the enabling of governments to transmit orders to local authorities for purposes of insurgency suppression. For Siegert, language and communication are forms of power, and the postal system is a specific historical instance of the organisation of power.

Siegert is interested in the physical forms of transmission technologies. Material details are analysed, such as how note paper is folded (thick pergament, unable to be folded or concealed necessitates/coincides with publicness, an openness of communication; thin foldable paper, enables privacy, secrecy, although of course not thereby negating the possibility of interception). The physical state of the letter and its transmissibility makes it possible to decipher the historical and social implications of postal technologies. Significant is also the networks of relations that surround transmission technologies - i.e. the tariffs charged, the introduction of universal postage rates, the process of recorded delivery. Who pays, sender or the addressee? Does the state take the postage fees? Should all sent items cost the same? How should the rates be set - by distance or weight? When are letter boxes invented and how does it come about that they manage to colonise every door and many street corners, thereby making the injunction to communication possible and inescapable? How and when are address forms standardised? The stamp is one marker of standardisation. The postcard represents another example: a stamp for writing on. It represents a deconstruction of the letter, in its reduction of the materiality of communication to its naked, public economy. Further losses of postal intimacy are signalled by the postcard with pre-printed text and pre-existent picture, made standard size. Siegert sees the postcard as the 'virus of the world post', decisively excluding all postal intimacy. If the pillar box made the nation the neighbourhood, and was erected, along with the letter slit and the sticky envelope in order to eliminate time-wasting, the inauguration of the world postal system in 1874 further homogenises, shrinks or negates space and geography. Stamp, postcard and world post system are shown to be the deconstruction of the humanist 'thought that people can use letters to communicate with one another' (Kafka). These technologies infringe the intimate nature of the discourses of the letter and the novel: leading toward the public nature of the postcard (deconstruction of the letter), while the expansion of automaticized printing enables the omnipresence of the newspaper and pamphlet (the death of literature) - available on mail order.

Post exceeds the exchange of letters. Postal technologies, fulfilling their historical mission of subjectivity formation, infect literary forms. Siegert proposes that the novel form is intimately bound up with the form of the private letter - the revelation of intimate details, the personal address. Connections are drawn between the rise of a female readership - the reader as feminine - and the rise of the Romantic novelist, and both are shown to engage in a personal, emotional discourse variously called romance or Romanticism. Love letters and early nineteenth century literature are two facets of a new intimate discourse. Indeed, Siegert claims that the letter, the epistolary novel and the modern diary all emerge at the same time. Examples of *letterature* include Goethe and the very intimate address of the early nineteenth century novel, or modernist (and postal worker) August Stramm and his stripped down word-efficient telegraphic style of poetry. Kafka's paranoid style is shown to be deeply enmeshed in his obsessions with the post as ghostly form of communication, comprised of ill-boding messages that are forced upon receivers or desperately desired letters which never arrive. Franz Kafka was only truly happy sending his mail, his love letters, by recorded delivery, so as to be sure of their arrival. For him, the post is part of an ever more victorious system of 'ghost communication', along with the telegraph, telephone and radio, all communication technologies which are destined to win out over immediate human communication systems of rail, cars and planes, which bring people together, rather than delivering mere ghostly signs of/by people.

Siegert charts Kafka's various postal practices, through a study of his many love letters to Felice Bauer, a typist from Berlin, who works for a large phonograph firm, and types up writers' manuscripts on the side. That Bauer is a typist puts her in the same class as the large numbers of female telephone operators: all women involved with mechanical discourse-technologies. Siegert relates how Kafka's love letter praxis enacts the end of intimate communication, in a variety of ways. Kafka types his letters, often from his office, because he finds himself able to slip in the process into an écriture automatique. (The invention of the typewriter is another instance of how in the age of standardised serial production, individuality is only a defect in the machine [c.f. all those criminological tales about typewritten hanging e's etc.]). Kafka's attempt to tie himself to Bauer through love letters which are typed, and as such remain anonymous because impersonal, fails and Bauer marries a businessman. In the war-period, Kafka, fearful of letter hold-ups by the censor, types his love letters on postcards. Their ease of reading and their publicness should speed up their passage: but the price paid is intimacy. Just as public is Kafka's dedication of the novella ' the Judgement' to Bauer, continuing thus the insinuation of literature as letter from man to woman. Kafka's writing is shown to end communication per se: his letters increasingly reflect on the process of writing and the possibility of (not) receiving letters. In the context of a more rapid flow of post (eight deliveries seven days a week in Berlin in 1913), Kafka begins to thematise the possibility of letters crossing in the post and thus negating each other. By Kafka's time, the post is seen to have become a huge, mad, self-referential post-machine.

In the last years of the epoch of the post, the letter participates in a system of potential permanent contact through the increasing automisation of postal communication: prepaid postage, postal rates, letter box slits, anonymous postmen, fixed collection and delivery times. the machine is up and running, but is then technologically outbid. With the invention of telephony and telegraphy not only frustration of the geographical space of transmission are overcome but also delays in the time of transmission. The telephone gives impetus to a new communication science of sound, a phonology, which tears language from the domain of poets, philosophers and literary critics. And it is shown to destroy the love letter, instituting in its place a system in which declarations of love are chargeable by the minute. For Siegert the telephone creates a peculiar feminine discourse without subject. Women enter the labour market (as long as they remain unwed) as telephonists, as exchange operators, with given scripts to utter as responses. In Germany, for example, this script is roughly the subject-evading, impersonal formula 'office here, what is to be done?' Women, their voice frequencies apparently more attuned to telephonic frequencies, had once been the objects of novels' and letters' intimate, secret whispers, and now become operators of a machinery to which they are particularly suited, but which offers them no autonomy or authorship. Women become agents of mechanical media. Simultaneously handwriting, the personal touch, is decisively over, made technologically redundant.

The final ruminations in 'Relais' switch to a study of telephonic communication models of the 1940s, especially those devised by Shannon, who introduces the concept 'noise' into communication. Shannon devised an early system of digital encoding, which encrypts messages in binary forms in order to send them. This, which will be perfected by computing technologies, signals the end of the post and the end of literature for Siegert. Human language has become redundant and script, sound and image are all convertible parts of the same code. The end of postal systems is seen to occur in the age of electronic communications, when the machines engage in an artificially intelligent communication, which no longer relies on any sort of human moment to relay (hi)stories.

THE END

B-Complex

A to B: " I want you to imagine that you stand before the entrance to a vast and deceptive labyrinth, not a static entrance, but a portal that will transport you to some random location deep within its structure. Beyond this point all distinction will become blurred: passages will mutate becoming distorted perversions of their former selves, the whole complex will fold in on itself in an endless recursion causing multi-dimensional paradoxes that are impossible to rationalise with the tools of logic. What would you do ?"

B's reply: " As you once stated, *'Everything in the universe goes by indirection. There are no straight lines.'* Therefore I would enter the complex - it is my only option ."

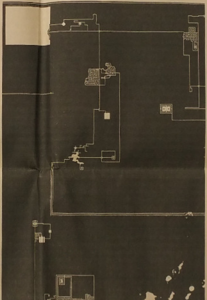
A to B: " Of course you would! Inside, the structure would appear to be the convoluted product of some insane architect. The shape and decoration of the passages would be eccentric (a precondition of the mind required to design such a structure). The chaotic puzzle would imply an underlying solution but you would quickly realise that the act of searching for it constituted a futile activity. You would ask yourself 'How do I navigate myself through this madness?' What would you do? "

B's reply: " As you once stated, *'The formula 'Two plus two equals five' is not without its attractions.'* Therefore I would erase all I had known before and begin to operate on the structure's terms and rules (or lack of them)"

A to B: " Of course you would! After some time the irrationalities of the complex would no longer be so. The complex would become normalised and your knowledge of it would grow. It would become your complex, it would be defined by your rules because your rules would be its rules. You would forget that you were ever outside the complex. It would seem the inevitable universe which forms your very existence. The B-complex. Your thoughts eventually would turn to its creator. What would you do?"

B's reply: " As you once stated, *'A hen is only an egg's way of making another egg.'* I would be somewhat powerless to do anything as I had already erased all my former knowledge. I may, for instance, assume that the complex was my creation, I would, therefore, need to engage in some experimentation; Using the knowledge gained from my time in the complex I would create another being vastly more intelligent than myself that might solve the intricacies of the labyrinth after my death (if such a thing exists in there)"

A to B: " Of course you would, Of course you would!"



Turins Contract

CONTINUED FROMPAGE 3

, or enough copies of the Encyclopaedia Britannia to sink a small boat, i.e. almost impossible to copy to a floppy for your friends. Secondly it was read only. This put people into a situation which they could cope with. Author vs. Reader relationship a situation which is ominously shared by the world wide web. By mixing digital images, digital sound, computer assisted animation, and importing video and three dimensional imagery, but most significantly allowing these to be linked together via scripts or mini programs which could react to user input, Multimedia was defined by the nerd kings. Like the princess of Serindip they left it around for an unsuspecting computing community to come across.

As William Gibson once said: 'The street finds its own use for things', many artists, Julian Opie and Nina Pope spring to mind, are beginning to find a use for computer technology as a part of their general output.

As yet, art fell on to a dilemma it had not been previously forced to resolve. The elicitation of practical, not token interaction between observer and artwork. Taking its lead from advertising, software had to differentiate itself from other media. Multimedia has never reached a level of quality matching the original. Pictures are flat and pixelated (or is that resolutionaly challenged?), animations are tiny/jerky, text unreadable for prolonged exposure, sound is good but limited in length. True, things will get better if they get used but, the solution was to get the computer to do what it's good at - making primitive micro decisions. Thus 'interactivity' was born. No one needed it, but no one needed television, film, radio or the printed word. It was just lying around there with the words 'Hi I'm interactive, exploit me' written

Attractions

Light attracts moths

Television cameras attract waving people

Plus attracts minus

Cheese attracts mice

Seaside towns attract motorcyclists

Females attract males

Males attract males

Females attract females

Accidents attract an audience

Flashing lights attract fruit machine addicts

Black attracts goths

Horses attract 13 year old girls

Moving ships attract dolphins

Big objects attract small objects

Love attracts hate

Shit attracts flies

Sweets attract children

Pianos attract renditions of 'Chopsticks'

Money attracts money

Traffic cones attract students

Photo booths attract lovers

Blood attracts sharks

Leadheads attract lightning

Streamer: Keith Tyson

Streamer is a bridge between two infinitely distant points. It takes the form of a continuous linear sequence of texts and illustrations; each page of text becoming the generator for the subsequent text in the series. In this way, all that can ever be viewed is a section from the middle of its length, no matter how large the selection on show may be.

Unlike most texts, Streamer travels in two directions. Its path can never be predicted further than one text from its current



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Aloes Succorrine			
Almonds fweet	Leghorn	249	lb
	Altea	10	cwt.
Annatto	Mogadore	37	--
Afbes Pot	Barbadoes	173	--
Afbes Fresia	Newhaven	80	--
Argol	Ostend	14	--
Arfenic	Leghorn	1552	--
Balfam Capiri	Hamburgh	600	--
	Lifbon	151	lb
Barills	Virginia	80	--
	Leghorn	789	cwt.
Brandy	Belfaft	297	--
	Dunkirk	5217	gallon
Brimftone	Bordeaux	6344	--
Cantharides	Meffina	732	cwt.
Capers	Leghorn	140	lb
Caffis Fiftula	Cadiz	971	--
Cocos	Barbadoes	80	--
Coffee	Grenada	8	cwt.
Cochinoz	Grenada	5	--
Copperas White	Cadiz	16797	lb
Cotton Wool	Hamburgh	9	cwt.
	Smyrna	179000	lb
		40	bales
	Grenada	17	--
	Antigua	12000	lb
	Barbadoes	11000	--
		196	bales
	Tobago	322	--
		25000	lb
	Lifbon	9000	--
	Leghorn	1098	--
	Rotterdam	52	bags
Curraris	Zant	250	cwt.
Flax	Rotterdam	100	--
Fnfrick	Jamaica	2	tons
Galls	Nice	65	cwt.
	Leghorn	60	--
Ginger	Barbadoes	110	--
	Jamaica	35	--
Ginfang	Philadelphia	513	lb
	Georgia	200	--
	Valencia	8147	--
	S. Carolina	120	--
Gum Arabic	Leghorn	20	cwt.
Gum Seneca	Oftend	336	lb
	Rotterdam	35	cwt.
Hides, Ox & Cow	Jamaica	232	hides
Hides, Indian	Cadiz	4036	--
Hides, Horfe	Belfaft	52	--
Jalap	Cadiz	1000	lb
Jefuit's Bark	Cadiz	2686	--
Indigo	Cadiz	12550	--
	Georgia	6620	--
	Jamaica	200	--
	S. Carolina	4400	--
	Lifbon	1250	--
Jreos Root	Leghorn	8	cwt.
Jlingdale	Amfterdam	2	--
Juniper Berries	Leghorn	80	--
	Rotterdam	33	--
Kelp	Dublin	20	tons
Linfeed	Koningfberg	550	quartr
	Triefte	553	--
Logwood	Jamaica	43	tons
Madder	Rotterdam	211	cwt.
Manna	Leghorn	400	lb
Mahogany	Jamaica	43	tons
		22	planks
	S.Carolina	569	--
	Honduras	50	---
Nutmeg	Rotterdam	400	lb
Oats	Dublin	18	quartr
	Koningfberg	220	--
	Waterford	810	--
	Embden	360	--
Oil Lucca	Leghorn	1083	gall.
Oil ordinary	Leghorn	1260	--
	Oporto	1260	--
	Lifbon	1008	--
Oil Train	New England	1491	lb
Pimento	Jamaica	74088	--
	Oftend	4827	tons
Pork	Belfaft	30	lafts
Pitch	S. Carolina	7	cwt.
Prunes	Bordeaux	128	lb
Quickfilver	Rotterdam	1500	cwt.
Rice	Georgia	4028	--
	S. Carolina	5578	--
	Philadelphia	150	gall.
Runz	St. Kitt's	166	--
	Antigua	179	--
	Barbadoes	63	--
	Nevis	1260	--
	Mountferrat	60	--
	Jamaica	1598	--
	Grenada	167	lb
Saccherunt Satuini	Rotterdam	296	--
Salop	Smyrna	860	--
Sago Powder	Savannah	2000	--
Seneca Root	Philadelphia	259	cwt.
Saffafras	S. Carolina	240	lb
Saphors	Hamburgh	2240	cwt.
Seed Clover	Amfterdam	6	lb
Senna	Leghorn	4198	--
Snake Root	S. Carolina	71	--
	Virginia	250	doz.
Skins, Goat, tanned	Lifbon	157	fkins
Skins, Goat, raw	Leghorn	1000	doz.
Skins, calf, tanned	Oftend	15	--
	Amfterdam	20	--
Skins, Calf, raw	Belfaft	77	fkins
Skins, Deer in Hair	S. Carolina	1855	--
	Virginia	33	--
	Philadelphia	2311	--
	Georgia	3885	lb
Skins, Deer, drei	Georgia	1000	--
	S. Carolin	3000	--
Silk Thrown	Leghorn	5953	--
	Nice	7080	--
	Oftend	1290	--
	Leghorn	1439	--
	Smyrna	1530	--
	Naples	740	H.
Staves, Barrel	Hambro	40	--
Staves, Pipe & Hhd	Hambro	10	--
	S. Carolina	100	lb
Sponges	Smyrna	2200	cwt.
Sugar	Jamaica	12787	--
	St. Kitt's	4147	--
	Tobago	2765	--
	St. Vincent's	195	--
	Grenada	455	--
	Barbadoes	4153	--
	Antigua	2279	--
	Montferrat	340	--
Tamarinds	Grenada	31	lb
	Barbadoes	350	--
	St. Kitt's	24	--
Tar	Virginia	6	lalbs
	S. Carolina	9	--
Tobacco	Maryla	60000	lb
	S. Carolina	6165	--
Tobacco, returned	Oftend	5000	--
	Virginia	20	--
	Georgia	150	--
Turmeric	Tobago	10000	lb
	Barbadoes	200	--
Unrated Roots	Virginia	860	--
	Philadelphia	89	--
Drugs	Virginia	64	--
Valonia	Leghorn	400	cwt.
Wood, Box	Smyrna	495	lb
Wood Cedar	S. Carolina	137	planks
		8	tons
Wood Cherry	S. Carolina	2	--
Wood Braziletto	Jamaica	6	--
Wool, Goats	Smyrna	10200	lb
Wine, French	Boulogne	778	gall.
	Bourdeaux	1904	--
Italian	Leghorn	241	--
	Naples	133	--
Lifbon	Lifbon	3332	--
Madeira	Iudia	507	--
	Virginia	62	--
	Gibraltar	315	--
	Philadelphia	8	--
	St. Kitt's	107	--
	Antigua	26	--
	Grenada	294	--
Port	Oporto	27825	--
Rhenifh	Hambro	8	--
	Bremen	69	--
	Rotterdam	25	--
Spanish	Cadiz	2086	--
	Malaga	102	--
	Gibraltar	758	--
Yarn Cotton	Smyrna	400	lb
	Leghorn	250	--
Yarn Mohair	Smyrna	800	--
Yellow Berries	Smyrna	12	cwt.



position, as each panel must be complete before it can act as generator. Streamer has no distinguishable point of origin nor any teleology to fulfil.

As Streamer navigated through various subjects and discourses, it becomes a diverse library that manifests itself through magazines, art galleries, books, recordings, posters and the Internet.

All streamer panels are original works of fiction. ● Keith Tyson.

Traffic

Travel news : An overturned lorry on the M6 past junction 28 is causing long delays and tail-backs of up to 2 miles. Drivers are advised to find alternative routes. On the underground today : A security alert on the Victoria line means there is, for the moment, no service between Kings Cross and Victoria. We will bring you further news as it comes in. This is Martin Macereth for 145.4 FM Travel News, on the hour - every hour, brought to you in association with the A.A. - Britain's fourth emergency service....

GEO 934Y (Ford)
Geoff Pike was dreaming that one of his Netherland Dwarfs had won overall best rabbit at the inter-county agricultural show. As he imagined collecting the trophy he took a long draw on his Silk Cut Low Tar and stared at the kids who were pulling faces at him from the backseat of the car in front. Ugly kids - wouldn't recommend them for best of breed. Bad pedigree. Ugly parents.
The queue shuffled slightly forward.

MR BASS (B.M.W)
Nobody could see Earl but Earl could see them. The windows of his B.M.W. were tinted black. X-series 2000 speakers were pumping out a deep base line
" 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, like a rocket in my poc.. gonna take off, make off, Ain't gonna snake off, 'cause.. " Earl turned the cassette off and took a can of cola from the glove compartment.

DHL 34D (Audi)
Catch a falling star and put it in your pocket, save it for a rainy day. Catch a falling star and put it in your pocket, never let it fade away...
Will you stop singing that awful song John !
Sorry, its stuck in my head........ Oh God, I wish this jam would move.
Just calm down, there is nothing you can do to speed it up, put the radio on or something.........
NO WAY!
That's amazing !
You must be psychic or something. Shit! What are the chances of that happening ?
I heard that people can pick up the radio on their false teeth.
Maybe someone had it on their car radio and you subconsciously heard it.
Wow, I should be on Arthur C Clark's Mysterious World.

FBC 45T (Mercedes Coach)
Attention class ! We are going to be arriving home later than planned, so I'm getting off to ring the school and leave a message for your parents. In the mean time the driver is going to put a video on. If the driver reports any bad behaviour while I'm away then next week's trip will be cancelled. Be good.

Turins Contract

cont. from previous page

all over it.

The primary problem artists are faced with is one of loose talk. "Hay is this coke can interactive ? ' Yer sure I'm looking at it, I'm interacting with it"- some body give that man a beer. How ever, computers have a lousy habit of begin immutable to Hetro logic. The other elements of the general collision of materials were on general exhibition. Although very few people have seen Turin's contract, the small print mentioned the notion of the deskilling. Deskilling is a term used by 70's sociologists and appropriate technology buffs to describe the process where the micro decisions are adopted by the machine. In computing terms this removes the stuff that needs to the craft skill i.e. the long time spent coming to terms with the details of the material, leaving only the creative and the boring and completely unautomisiable boring stuff. Look out for a company near you which only has crazed top executives, a bunch of machines and a janitor working in it, but I forgot you already listen to Radio One. Deskilling is different from automation, automation also absolves the user from the creative process too - that bit's done by the engineers.

Grooving on down the logic superhighway, it's possible to see computing as a skill displacement activity. There are skills in computer usage, I should know I mark people over this. Like reading and writing and, unlike serving a hamburger, computer 'intuition' is continuously recyclable. Scan an image, pop it into strata vision, wrap it around a 3D sphere, render it, cut and paste it into a 3D animation; once you have got used to your first couple of systems the principles are carried on to the next piece of software. The crucial difference is that the same core skill is being reproduced across software, a hardened Mac user can assimilate a new chunk of software faster than a junky can get a hit from their latest score (this is even true to a lesser degree in windows). While no expert, I have convincingly guided new users in the use of software I have never heard of before.

Waiting for the last bus, this leaves only two problems, content and the fleshy access to the means of production. The computer artist has a grave problem: how to avoid being identified with the multi-megabyte 'my first pony' computer assisted rat-shit out there in the big room. For a nation brought up with a fear-of-being-crap-so-they-bought-their-kids-colouring-in-books, the shear booklike professionalism of their first laser print makes us believe the authority of the 'quality' image. With deskilling, quality is now cheap, the level of craft most people hope will guide them in the good stuff is officially trivial. For the computer artist one response to all the rat-shit is the "hay look I'm just an artist who just happens to use a computer" tee shirt. Yer sure, the same way a ceramist is just an artist who happens to use clay, it would have been steel but the steel shop doesn't deliver. It scores high on the first rationalisation chart, but there is the feeling that this negates the purpose of using the medium, its new possibilities and new limitations. I feel we need some kind of solution to this before computer art looses all potential for serious meaning (like comics did in the 1920's).

Looking at the collision between subject divides like this you being to see a cultural imperative behind the introduction of no-fixed agenda magazines like Mediamatic, Artifice, Mute, Wired and Mondo 2000. Perhaps they could be better described as the agenda is the agenda magazines. I'm constantly surprised when I meet people who too are seeing the technosocial complex as the playground which slips between 'high' and 'low' art. Computer games become the extension of the graphic and soon, in an arcade near you, the architectural experience. Conversations with Joe B. of Probe indicate a fusion between the cinematic and videogame content. Games like Batman and Alien show a different unique media fusion over content, and when the game grosses more than the film it's hard to fix what is the original and what is the merchandising. When the music is in the top 40, the game is re engineered for the theme park, the book (there are 5 books about sim city alone), magazine (8 game magazines), the notions of 'medium' to the game world are verging on the quaint. This is the mispelt manifesto of the corporate cultural combine, it is also symptomatic of the wider synthesis going on in culture.

Hyping to the max, games are clearly the leaders in the notions of interactivity. While Sonic T. Hedgehog is one of the most successful in braking the bonds of 'narrative', the message delivered seems null and void. As Ted 'HyperText' Nelson put it 'the games of today are the user interfaces of tomorrow', a computer game is primarily an interactive meta-experience, but hay the medium is the 'massage'. Non interactive games (except for cellular automata) are almost a contradiction in terms, games are the new laboratories of the avant guarde, and remember, science is the new rock and roll. Like a granny getting off the bus, the hip-hype terminology too, is slowly being exported from the games community. Players spend frozen hours discussing something they can only flacidly describe as 'gameplay' , the feeling about the interactivity of the piece. Like a blunt syringe, the animation, the graphics, the sound and plot is just a way of delivering the 'gameplay' to the user. I feel that before artists start to appropriate game-as-metaphor they should really try to assimilate gameplay/gameboy to their work.

While watching VNS matrix at ICA's Terminal Futures, I could really roll with the fall's they where handing out. They too where operating on the basis of game as proto art poin. Figure my general disappointment when I discovered that, well OK they hadn't implemented anything yet. In this post literate psycho culture, the intertwingling of image, animation, space, sound, text and network would give artists a way of expanding their ecology of media and their audience. Some 40% of the population own a game, but not an original painting. It's also time to realise that games are skidding over the abyss of content. 90% of games (according to the Face magazine) involve hero rescuing trapped heroine. Already neo-Fascists have masturbated over the idea of brain washing the 'youth' of the nation via race hatred filled games (not realising how cynical most 11 year olds are). The notion of media eliciting response seems both a well-spelt and comfortable companion seeking long term lasting relationship
for art.

Naturally, computer as interactivity box is not the only way computer art can express it's deep, moody personality. The computer is the no-agenda box, it will pop up in a number of places, in a number of frames of reference but, as Doug Elbert, inventor of the mouse said: 'A computer is a device for thinking with'. The game arena is a new mosaic ready to be accessed, it is firmly part of the deconfliction of art. The other main experience in the computing explosion is the Internet. After you have been numbed by the amount of misinformation, the other main service the internet is sold on is the ability to interact with others, even mosaic is called a frozen conversation. Alternatively you could leave your terminal and go and talk to the people next door and not have to pay any connection charges.

Loose adjectives litter the super information highway waiting to
cause a serious pulp pileup. Broken by the casual technical illiteracy it's hard to have a good feel as to where things end up. The new media collision, feels to be both simultaneously here around us and also lost in the heat haze in the distance. How subject areas will evolve to adapt to the new insecurity is problematic. On a good day it's reassuring to spin around the ideas of the ultimately retro renaissance. The analogy is in the air, the feel love and mixing between technology and Art, a symbiosis where both gain.

Since cubism and quantum theory, most subjects have got beyond the phase of being intelligible. I have known clever programmers who think architecture is all to do with houses. Equally many clever architects and lecturers are still failing to realise what impact general computing will have on architecture's teaching and practice.

Again Benjamin Woolly comes screeching to the rescue by inferring a generic similarity between subjects like quantum theory and post-modernism. This infers a new media collision along the lines of the comet which hit Jupiter. What might be dubbed the grand unified similarity.

When spinning out on the dance floor it's easy to see the Mandelbrot fractal tee shirt as a symbol of how science unites itself into culture, both are a product of each other. Both Art and science are reservoirs of 'Memes', mind viri, which sometimes leak out of the lab to run riot on an unsuspecting public. Any super virus, once running wild, will naturally evolve and adapt to its environment in order to further its Darwinian purpose. As generators, both 'Art' and 'Science' have been unified from the very beginning. On the other hand, when someone buys a fractal tee shirt what ideas are they really buying into?

THE END



Viral Buds

This is a viral bud hallucogenic stylised quasi-kitsch
no innocent flower satiated little bud buddi last gem
from Sun Garden Persia's proto-paradise Garden of
Hesperides from the mythic jewelled gardens cast thro
millennia discus like forward 5000 years later perverse
small relic glows luminous neon small comfort in form
from petroleum product ultra-light greens and chemical
yellows this is no opal trophy.

Sarah Statan

Taking the Alien Exam

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"It is the middle of the night above a deserted mine shaft above a dark valley, four mediums are gathered in an open circle. They slowly, gently, enter, leave and re-enter trance states. They communicate with the dead. One of the mediums is wired up to a heart-beat monitor. The rhythm of the heartbeat reverberates and echoes around the mine shaft. The circle, dark, subdued, candle-lit is surrounded by shadowed figures, some crouching, operating an array of high technology equipment. The body heat of the mediums is recorded by a highly heat-sensitive thermographic TV camera. There is high quality video and sound recording. A microwave transmitter sends the thermographic images across the valley where a group of witnesses and curious members of the public are gathered in a tent, situated by a floodlit, 16th century decommissioned chapel. The mediums try to transmit their own images across the valley. One medium enters an intensive trance and his heartbeat, incredibly, speeds up to a continuous hum. All the recording equipment goes dead."

"In a warehouse in a Yorkshire industrial town, a large white sphere is installed. Technicians in protective clothing slide individual participants, headfirst, lying on their backs on an oven-rack style apparatus, into the sphere. The hatch is closed and they are isolated, apparently floating in an intense light from above. After a while, the colour of the light subtly changes. Then there is a flash, almost inducing electrical shock in the subject. The light continues to flash, so bright that it affects the retina whether or not the eyes are closed. Geometric patterns appear involuntarily, hexagons and octagons opening precisely as the computer programmes, linked to the brain machine, vary the stroboscopic light. It is similar to the opening stages of an LSD experience. The patterns on the retinal, the involuntary colour changes just outside the field of vision, the loss of control, are the same whoever the subject is. The whole experience also is highly similar to the many accounts of UFO abduction currently in circulation."

These are four accounts of unusual and radical ways in which humans and technology have interfaced. The last three are descriptions, by me, of artworks by UK artists Bruce Gilchrist and Kathleen Rogers respectively and by James Turrell, the US light and earth artist. The first is apparently a covert experiment taking place on a US military base during the sixties and seventies and comes from the field of UFO and covert 'black budget' technology investigation.

I argue that these fields are becoming uniquely interfaced and that the use of technology in art and the imagination, where it meets 'real' phenomena is an area of practice meriting extremely serious attention. I also infer that art provides a coherent belief system and structure that can positively be used as an alternative to science and religion (without attempting to replace or masquerade as either).

The latter descriptions are not scientific experiments not are they aesthetic artworks or installations. Rather they could be seen as personal enquiries presented as artworks. They deal with areas sometimes in the realm of the spiritual but without relying on established belief structures. They can be viewed by the public but at least 2/3 of the work is essentially hidden and takes place within the consciousness of the individual humans participating. The data collected is not scientific evidence as such but is rather poetic debris which can be analysed and structured at will.

I am presenting these four examples as an attempt at a juxtaposition of concerns that touch upon a number of debates. These debates include questions that consider new attitudes to the human within the context of technology. They include the evolutionary consequences of the human/machine interface, the metaphor of the cyborg, the potentially transcendent nature of cyberspace and the iconic motif of the extraterrestrial (or extradimensional) manifestation. They inhabit all areas between science and mysticism, between reality and fiction, between artwork and thought experiment. They employ art as a kind of vector in which a bigger picture is involved (Gilchrist). They explore the grey area between on one hand the human subconscious and its resident demons and monsters and on the other nuts and bolts sightings and close encounters with apparently extra-terrestrial phenomena (Turrell). They are possibly less performances or installations than film sets where the process of shooting is more important than the product. They are all in a sense, unfinished open-ended works.

The first example, as I have stated, is not an artwork but a purportedly actual description of a series of secret experiments. Whether they took place or not is less important than the poetics of the imagery (though the authors and the research community from which these events spring, to whom these are matters of life and death, would probably not appreciate such a stance). They emerge from a nexus of post-cold war conspiracy theory, ufology, and a form of technological desire, specific to male Americans of a certain age, usually with military backgrounds. They link up with the welter of legends surrounding the loves of Tesla and Von Neumann, who reputedly caused a battleship to literally disappear in Philadelphia harbour in 1944 using a combination of high-voltage electromagnetic coils and emergent computer technology. They satisfy exponents of theories of 'reverse engineering' which claim that secret unelected governments have had access to alien technologies and are slowly integrating them into terrestrial applications such as the Stealth bomber and the top-secret 'Auroa' military plane which employ elements of electronic invisibility. The description of the experiments in the Montauk project bear an indirect but uncanny resemblance to the 'Ganzfeld' techniques being used by the department of parapsychology at Edinburgh University which uses computer technology to both enhance and verify water-tight testing of telepathic abilities on humans.

The works by Bruce Gilchrist and Kathleen Rogers are from the EarthWire project which took place in a remote rural location in North East England in July 1994 and which was curated by Tracey Warr and myself. The sleep project by Gilchrist was a result of a residency by the artist at the Sleep research laboratories at the University of Austin, Texas. Four sleepers reversed their sleep patterns and slept in the open observed. Their intended experiments with lucid dreaming were to some extent hampered by the by-products of the inversion, which produced extended altered states during their waking hours, including a hypnagogic state which left them convinced that they had not slept when actually they had. Gilchrist will continue this work with an experiment/installation using a bioactivity translator linked to a brain machine in which the public will be able to observe changes in the artists skin potential voltage during various states of consciousness.

Kathleen Rogers is primarily an electronic artist who has worked with VR applications and who has a strong interest in and active engagement with parapsychology. She herself has undertaken Ganzfeld tests at Edinburgh University. Her collaboration with the mediums and the use of both the thermographic camera and the microwave transmitter follows in a tradition of using technology to 'test' phenomena, although the discourse between the two can often be unstable. As in those scientific experiments that increasingly challenge the subjectivity of the observer the reliability of 'data' and 'evidence' produced by the most reliable equipment seem as a rule to be affected whenever powerful phenomena are present. The video and sound records that do exist are of a compelling nature and are still being examined by the artist for clues and indications to where this collaboration might lead.

I include a description of James Turrell's 'Gasworks' one-on-one installation, presented by the Henry Moore Sculpture Studio at Dean Clough, Halifax because it provides an indication of where this kind of work might be travelling on a wider scale. Turrell, as is widely known, is constructing a vast earthwork at the Roden Crater in Arizona, to open at the millennium. Involving the ancient technique of 'celestial vaulting' on a massive scale, the site also resembles nothing less than a landing site for for craft of uncertain origin. Unusually, for an internationally reputed artist who is almost an establishment figure, Turrell openly admits to more than a passing interest in the UFO as both metaphor and scientific possibility. 'Gasworks' in both its direct engagement with the technology of human consciousness and resemblance to an abduction scenario is quite openly linked to this interest. The predecessor to the work was in fact titled 'Alien Exam'.

The political researcher and ufological writer Michael Lindemann has, in 'UFO's and the alien presence – time for the truth', about the possibilities of secret government cover-ups of UFO incidents, referred to the conspiracy of active ridicule concerning UFO-related matters. The same conspiracy could well be extended to matters parapsychological, and indeed any elements involving the extra-scientific investigation of the technology of human consciousness. With an alternative belief system to that of science and religion (though perhaps with an aesthetic price to pay) it may be that artists can be immune to this conspiracy. Certainly, with an artist of the stature and resources of James Turrell apparently flying in the face of the culture of disbelief and ridicule, those who wish to continue these 'personal enquiries' into such areas have a strong and powerful ally.

This essay was first published in the catalogue for the EUROPEAN MEDIA FESTIVAL in Osnabrück Sept 1994

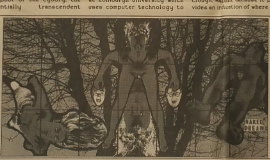
The extract at the start of the essay is from: 'THE MONTAUK PROJECTS – EXPERIMENTS IN TIME' by Preston B. Nichols with Peter Moon, 1992 SKY BOOKS, NY.

Rob La Frenais is currently putting together a conference and event, THE INCIDENT, which will futher investigate the above ideas.

the end

Factual

Tel: 071 613 5048



Nonsense

Fax: 071 613 5780

Which Way Forward?

Eddie Harrison

In recent times, goes one popular argument, popular music has experienced a move away from the icons of previous decades towards a faceless, anti-charismatic pop 'activism', whose hidden, misanthropic, or at the very least drugged up, exponents hide behind computer terminals in darkest suburbia plotting their course within the pop world, before hiring the obligatory bimbo to give the necessary aesthetic appeal and lyrical sophisication which only they can truly provide.

This is partially true. With a Roland 303 (bass) and an 808 (drums), the need for 'live' musicianship has become increasingly redundant. Who needs a bass when you can use a Sub bass, capabel of audio gymnastics? Or a drummer, when you can programme your own, or sample someone else's?
But in other ways this assessment is rather inaccurate. For we have, at the forefrunt of what can loosely be termed techno music (incorporating a myriad of sub-genres), in DJ's and producers, all the icons, all the performers we could possibly hope for – it's just that very few of them are stars in the traditional sense of the word.

Arguably, the lack of an identifiable, digestible, 'star value' system within techno has helped to keep the product itself somewhat unattainable for major record companies, and therefore underground and relatively subversive as a result. The typical hungry record executive, therefore, often finds himself firmly locked out of the pantry, unable to enter for reasons too obvious and too numberous to mention. But should he go on a diet? Or will the food, as is often the way, become so doctored, widely available, and easily reproduced, that even the original recipe will lose its appeal?

At the moment this is unlikely, for the simple reason that, in the diaspora of contemporary dance music in general, small is beautiful. In recent years, the profusion of white-label 12 inch records (quick, non-company releases, usually limited to a few thousand copies), and concurrent growth in the number of small scale record companies in major British cities, has almost single handedly helped to keep the record industry afloat. This is non-conglomerate-friendly music; by the underground, for the underground. But for how long? Could it be that the continuing importance of technology in music is going to take the power away from this group of people? – a case of the sharks gobbling up the minnows – or is a more optimistic outlook feasible?

In what is a famously nepotisitc and corrupt industry, wherein both producer and consumer often have little control over the product itself, the notion that technology can empower individuals in previously weak, or even vulnerable situations has many adherents. Some of those involved in making the music see a strong potential in using technology for what they see as radical change. One such duo, The Future Sound of London, are fully aware of the possibilities of the Internet, in particular, becoming a direct channel of communication between themselves and their audience. A recent 'tour', accompanied by veteran guitarist Robert Fripp, involved their studio based performance being fed down British Telecom's digital phone link to a series of local radio stations, with graphic images being simulataneously sent down the Internet, to be downloaded, doctored or merely observed by their recipients; giving new meaning to the phrase 'audience participation'.

Similar catalyst for change – at least as far as audience pariticipation is concerned; ownership is a different matter– lie with CD-rom and CD-I, 'Peter Gabriel's Secret World' – with its written text, thirty minutes of audio, hundred minutes of video, and hundred full colour photographic images – may smack of grandiose self indulgence, but it is the tip of an industry altering iceberg.

The recent London launch of Cerebrus, an independent company who transfer digital tape recordings onto database before making them available to the public on the Internet, could also set a precedent; with organisations missing out the industry in the middle by taking the product directly to the consumer and possibly, just possibly, forcing a reorganisation of the industry's internal structure. Possibly. But with all the urgent talk of late, with the continued use of words like 'empowerment' and 'participation' one or two questions from the listener's point of view beg to be asked. How much, for example, do the present, 'E' influenced generation really want to participapte in music in an interactive fashion? The select few who have access to the various technologies might, but what about the twelve-inch buying masses? Can they make the change from passive liteners to active game players? Do they have the desire?

Interaction, this year's buzzword, does not necessarily correspond to everybody's idea of recreation. Indeed, there are many who argue that the opposite is the case. What is important, though, is the possibility of interaction and participation. For those who actually desire it; the choice.

Whether or not this choice becomes widely available in the near future remains to be seen, of course, as no one really knows what the future holds. Or do they?

the end

The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reconstruction

BY JOHN PAUL BICHARD

(A narrated conversation for four or more players)

Set in early 1990's London in a stylish, three bedroomed conversion. The dining room after a dinner party, drinks poured, some light classical music playing almost imperceptibly, the only light coming from the embers of a low open fire. A long granite topped dining table is centrally positioned surrounded by the appropriate number of chairs. The narrator sits to the left of the long edge of the table, nearest to the fire. He is dresed in black. The guests sit to the right of him along the back of the table.

The Narrator should be male in his late forties to early fifties with a soft, gravelly voice, maybe a slight regional lilt. His words to be delivered slowly and deliberately in a gentle, somewhat sympathetic manner. Should he be asked, the narrator will assure the guests that all his stories are faithful accounts of real events.

The guests should be invited players, any number above three being allowable.

There should be a ten to fifteen second delay after the third story to allow the guests to interject.

Narrator:

I remember listening to the radio one evening, sometime in the mid seventies. The how was a live broadcast from an accident and emergency ward, an early fly on the wall documentary. One of the reported incidents occurred on a building site. A labourer had fallen from his scaffold, plunged seventy feet to the ground and landed flat on his feet. His shins travelled on through his ankles to impale the soft earth on which he suddenly stood. The medics had to pluck him from the earth. He suffered terrible internal injuries; a ruptured spleen, collapsed lungs, torn pericardium, broken ribs, broken limbs, compacted spine and of course shattered ankles. Later on that evening there was a power strike, one of many that winter.

For one year exactly, I worked in a rubber factory. In order to mix the rubber with curing compounds, it had to be milled. Each mill comprised two 52 inch diameter steel rollers about 4 feet wide, mounted horizontally in a large steel cradle, not unlike a mangle laid on its side. The gap between the rollers could be varied but was usually set between 1/2 and 1/16 of an inch. The rubber was thrown into the rollers where it was crushed, churned and heated bu the friction, emerging from the rollers in a thin wide ribbon. The story goes that one day, the service engineers were in doing a maintenance inspection of the mills. They had removed the dust extractor from the top of the mill when the motor was inadvertently started. One of the engineers lost his balance and fell headlong into the slowly revolving deums. He was promptly gripped and squeezed through the tiny gap between the rollers. The machine made a terrible sound and when he was about half way through, his legs burst under pressure sending a fountain of blood some 25 feet into the air only stopping when it reached the ceiling.

Several disasters are cited at safety lectures. These include being dragged into a lathe and flapped around like a rag doll or falling into a grain silo, sinking into the grain and suffocating. There are numerous warnings covering severed digits and limbs, crushings and explosions but one in particular has stuck in my mind. It involved a labourer at a cement works. He was working next to a conveyor belt that spanned several hundred yards from the quarry to the cement kilns. The belt ran over twin V steel rollers, closely spaced to deal with the weight of the lime being carried. The labourer, in a moment of lapsed concentration, fell into the open sided conveyor landing face down on the fast moving belt. He only travelled a few feet until his head came into contact with the next roller. Being unable to pass between the roller and the coarse belt, his head was promptly worn away.

(Pause)

Several years ago, I worked throughout the Summer in an aircraft factory. During the last war, one of the workers, being of unsound mind, decided to end it all. He was a press operator, stamping out aluminium pressings on a massive hydraulic flat-bed press. At that time, safety guards were rudimentary and experienced operators would by-pass them to speed up the job. Being well acquainted with this particular machinery, the man in question de-activated the safety cage, placed his head on the bottom platen and activated the press. Under several tons of pressure, his head was instantly transformed into a very flat, very wide pancake.

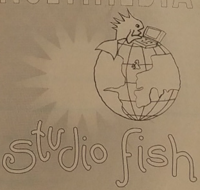
At the same factory, same Summer, we were working away in the stores one day when we heard that there had been a terrible accident involving one of the flight mechanics. As part of the final pre-flight tests, the aircraft's engines ar throttled up to full revs, the protective cowlings removed and the engines tuned so that they all run in sync. The engineer in question was tuning the inner port side engine. As it was a hot day he had the top part of his overalls off and tied to his waist. He was just ducking under the screaming engine when a gust of wind blew his overall up into the air intake. Once inside, the overalls pulled engineer after them, flipping him over feet first into the turbines. The engine stopped when it reached the bottom of his ribcage, having finely minced and atomised his lower body, blood and intestines. The high velocity red mist shot down the side of the plane, across the tarmac and up the side of nearby offices. In the cockpit a young apprentice engineer, who witnessed the event, fainted. It was very quiet in the bar that lunchtime.

(Pause, then conversation as and when it occurss)

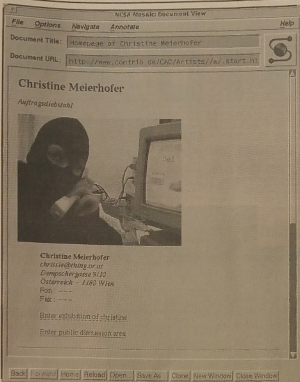
The work ends and the embers fade.

The End

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

C@C Computer Aided Curating

BY EVE GRUBINGER

description of the sculpture is available through the net. With the aid of a so called Concretisation Machine, the sculpture (a green nose) is being produced. Lie is a Researcher. He works in the European Centre for Nuclear Research CERN in Geneva, where he is further developing the World Wide Web.

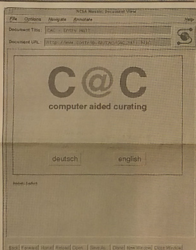
Coming from an artistic background, Pit Schultz (pit@contrib.de) from the Berlin Group "Botschaft" uses quasi-scientific methods. His <PLUG> Orgasmatron 0.1 Alpha is a collection of brain waves that were measured and digitally registered by means of a specific machine during orgasm. Schultz paradoxical archive of data plays with the tension between technological and erotic euphoria.

C@C has an office until September 1995 in KUNST-WERKE/ Institute for Contemporary Art and Theory, and in the course of the coming year will organise several lectures and discussions (C@C Discussions with the Artists - December 1994, Dont Postpone Joy, Networking Can Be Fun - February 1995, File-Options Navigate-Annotate - Spring/Summer 1995).

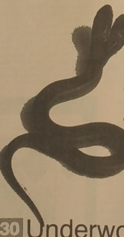
As an innovative project in the field of art, C@C will be present at exhibitions, art fairs, festivals and lectures in Germany, Britain, Austria and Switzerland to a public outside the World Wide Web.

Eva Grubinger, November 1994.
grubi@contrib.de

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You V gen

BY RANU MUKHERJEE

Cool Cement...as if it just rained, in the night
The air is hardly present but breath is easy. Transparent medium filling you with clarity. You are wandering again.
A town square with only three sides. The fourth, where you came from, now a membrane beyond which is a space, altogether different. *You are wandering against form and for a moment she is a town square, streetlit from somewhere, a job*

You wander like bacteria, or a moving tattoo, in dark recesses of complexity that often make you want to scream. Scream, cry, but this is survival, veining territory, as appearance bleeds to overflow and moves you.
For a moment you are here, watching. Everything is slightly too small. Working on something which plays like a stage, not quite a stage. The three sidewalks are lined by shop fronts. Fronts for something illicit. Sue a few modes of being.
Glass cased dioramas, dropping into nothing behind (which you imagine as arid white medium, more lost than lost). From this side they become almost planar, floating yet slicing through ground, with the violence of a diamond dispersed and reorganized into an icy clear sheet of guillotine. Looking still by weight of the cement, the incomplete square appearing to be context.
Dense color seeps into the haze of the street.

In each of the shallow spaces people act their merchant parts absolutely and perfectly. Smiles. *playing in the shallow space*
Glittering garments surrounding themselves with dress sellers. She sees their lips bleeding and cracking from the pressure in their hermetic tanks. She always feels the invisible stuff. Love their magic. interior giggles
supply and demand supply and demand supply and demand
Just like the full blown shops that have inventory and are encased in malls, here just encased, here, like you, to expose. with a heartbeat.
change your skin for a fire or a snapshot or some looting
Total transparency.
Illusion merchants are great for that. V consumes with vision, learns and moves. You buy illusion but you are artifice. She knows that everything is real.

Some one is here. Over there in the street near the far wall. It sweats without motion, thick and heavy, grimacing. Then it walks, trying to give itself gravity, mimicking mass, as if in a sand storm of soporific density. Movement agitated, abrubt. Frustration.
you are standing right in front of it now and it is trying to strangle you
you are a secret

It is named Tercom, after a military device, Terrain Contour Matching.
Maintaining an inital design, it detects, by form only and destroys anything else. It is angry with the nature of this space. Matter exists in a precarious state in its mind, as a kind of apparition, its memory confirming only outlines with certainty. Substance fills the form for Com, preciseley in its moment of attack, as if to plead guilty
and require destruction, leaving it with the feeling that its function is tragic yet neccessary. *completing the circuit* Here, the floating shop fronts mock this memory, hinting at trickery, impractical, evoking for it accusations of falsity, as they continue with seamlessness and the appearance of efficiency. invisible infrastructure. More smiles. Com can only make it false. Never been given the intelligence to *know* artifice, to see itself in it. Thinks its been given extra sensory devices. Reality firmly strapped to its boots, it embodies humanitarian defense strategy which amounts to pounding the shit out of things because they aren't 'real'.
an archetype that doesn't know it.
Here it is in a box, can't do anything with the fourth side where the membrane is without any edges.

She ducks and scrabbles low to the ground performing acrobatics and a chase, around bollards, trying to keep it from getting into contact. You watch it lunge blindly at its form as she mutates to anaemic. Once there is a slip. Com's hand moves right through her arm as she moves sideways. heat rises. Not direct enough to force it to see, it blocks and gets angrier, closed in towards boiling point, short circuit, blow out.

She knows that if she allowed it to strangle her it would pass right through her neck.

Its hands, it will be clenching its own. *clenching its own madness*

can't allow that
V glares right into the apocalypse. Apocalypse was fine. She always liked things bright and dark and it didn't seem to be going away. *History to you, long low wailing, her virulence, moving through things, going unnoticed, singing.*
Your facility to play dead or laugh won't work here.
play dead laugh leave a false name
If Com finds its madness by touching you it will transfer to an authority which will verify your lockup in their kind of oblivion, or suicide. Here is still illegal, seeping witchcraft allegations. *you are just atmosphere whose function is to denote feeding mute, intense, your fear pulsing with desire, you know other spaces where you feel*
turned here immensely strategic. It was beginning to feel like a job. Being numb means she may as well be dead *use the matching, backwards elsewhere. tuned in to counter transparent desire*
She moves as phage ribbon, looking for its blind spot and sensing the space behind her, she rolls in.

There were four of them, or two or six, at a long low table. *everything was tabled* White collar bored room executives, led by shop fronts, fronts for computer. Ties and scarves in cold coffee humming.
She moves across the room and they smile distractedly without looking up. Moving to the comfortable chair, unseen. They didn't see such things. They were *in* Control.
They scratch at the backs of their necks to a viral rythym, detecting some dust in the atmosphere. Oblivion. Com moves in and stops. It shifts slightly as it sees them not see her, but wonder what it wants here, looking up in a bored sort of way- inquisitive gesture roots it to the halt. No longer can make sense of what it was attacking. And its heat drops as time slows and it tries to keep walking as the night becomes longer. somewhere. She watches it slowly go pale. blind machine, it begins to hear long low wails of desperation coming from inside. It hates them, in a way, but can't attack here. It glimpses you now having done something else, illicit and excessive,
that looked like nothing at all.

what is this complicity here they are fair authorial suits. Why can't it act? front for illusion at the core of its being. Doesn't know what to do without a target. Can't attack an invisible target. *frozen in front of acrobatics*
It is given a combat troops drug - supply and demand - supply and demand-urges. Doesn't know what to do with this weird pull from somewhere it *has never touched* a piece of slow shock wave. You sense signal moving through a hollow bone cavity and its muscle screamed impossible at first and it closed its eyes tight but dark shadows kept moving across as it tried to maintain panic - thought as its process melts into cavities. doesn't know what to do with becoming physical.
another being within a gun. is this love ?

madness slips in. everyones madness.

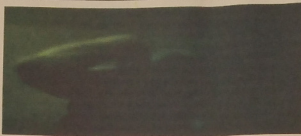
They get so focused on the inventory, backed by malls, killing eachother, shooting rapidly. surrounding themsleves with dress. Are people acting their parts. absolute. Com becomes deniable. *history to you in its wailing.* It felt the transparency of the shallow space. Glittering garments of a star folding in on itself. You move back to the fourth side.

Ranu Mukherjee
October 1994

THE END

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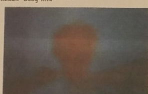
Pain Killer

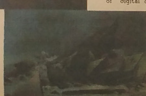
Maggie Roberts

Computers melt other machines, fusing them together-television-telephone-telex-taperecorder-VCR -laser disc. Broadcast tower linked to micro wave dish to satellite-phone line-cable-TV-fibre optic cords. The hugeness, the humming, a torrent of pure light. A semiotic web a global nervous system thinking for itself."

[Mark Downham, "Cyber-Punk". Vague 21. 1988]

Tornado Moan. Hear it. We're already Post-human. "Body invasion, the target: prosthetic limbs, implanted circuitry, cosmetic surgery, cyber-space, DNA, genetic alteration. And the real hard edge of mind invasion: brain-computer interfaces, artificial intelligence's, neuro-chemistry. . . Technology is radically redefining the nature of humanity, the nature of the self." [Ibid]





Gibson, Cadigan, Stephenson - Cyberpunk writers - know: Virilio, Baudrillard, Haraway, Lyotard, Deleuze and Guattari - cultural philosophers - know: the techno kids know. That we must change for the machines. There is no nostalgic intact 'natural' human space left to retreat into. Science has leant in to waste any lingering notion of subject identity, stressing cybernetic self-organising systems, chaos theory, morphic resonance, fractal paradigms - all emerging from a symbiotic relationship to machines. Only the self as cyborg in a net of non-linear dynamics can negotiate the late 20th century. The digital information space that now enables human/inhuman interface - Cyber space - is a new dimension, a new materiality. The next step in human evolution, which is either euphorically embraced as an opportunity to become ecstatic pixellated angels in the comfort of your own home, or is incorporated into a millenialist technophobic apocalypse. The issue is really one of adapting. The human ego isn't prepared yet to become pure signal.

Time's speeding up.We are already a Post Apocalyptic society, for whom the only pertinent nostalgia is for the Future. The Future's so old. In Greg Bear's "Anvil of Stars", there are planets - 'the most advanced civilisations', that show no traces of solid matter, organic or inorganic. Yet the level of electromagnetic energy flow between them, the force field of signal transmission, invisible pure communication, nearly blow the scanners of a passing spaceship. Is this the future for the human/ nanotechnology interface? Those who can adapt, downloaded. For those who refuse the end of the historically defined human subject . . .?

Late Capitalism has perpetuated the need to buy into the myth of the artist as authentic genius producing signed object artworks. The art market responds most efficiently to art about art. A dysfunctional vacuum, a redundant because now impossible closed system. No process, only product. No one gives a shit. It's less interesting than white noise. Some work understands, obviously. Not enough though, and there isn't much time left to become involved in designing the new Reality. According to numerous technoshamen such as Nick Land or self -appointed guru, Terence McKenna, 2012 is the year of Phase Change. Today's explorers describe what they find variously - 'Time-Wave-Zero' - 'Planetary Switch' - the coming on-line of Artificial Intelligence. 2012 is the end of linear Time for the Mayan Tzolkin Calendar. A people whose society functioned as a facilitator for the Priests' time travelling. A hyper dimensional shift is tracking us from the Future. Will many of us make it into the data cyclone, let alone Art.

So full of urgency now. Ultraviolet urgency. The colour of the electric strobe violence of the desert storms in Arizona. The colour at the very edge of human vision, slipping into wavebands travelling at speeds and in dimensions we cannot perceive - yet. "The last possible human deed is that which defines perception itself. " [Hakim Bey. "Chaos: The Broadsheets of Ontological Anarchism ". Autonomedia 1985]. Make art that matters. Images whose" beams are so urgent and tangible you must draw the shades in order to think in words." [Ibid]



Slice moonlight.

Art that touches, risks, reaches, intoxicates, confuses, immerses: Art that prepares us for fusion. A Technology of the Imagination that designs human convergence with the Inevitable. That explores the next dimensional site of consciousness. Vision discovers its physicality in Virtual Reality. Tactile infection. Tactile immersion. Art engineered through tactile vision: a multimedia experience that touches every sense simultaneously, and hurts. Fusion of physical and emotional responses.

There isn't enough Critique of our world, outside of so called Science Fiction, that incorporates the radical shift in human perception that is the direct consequence of the irreal now being exactly as accessible, 'real', concrete, as empirical geometric space. There is no transcendent 'elsewhere' left. It's all moving in, quite literally, crowding in to change our notion of 'here' forever: exploding beyond Immanence, 'here' has expanded to access the Fourth Dimension. It is constructing neural networks wired up to bypass the mediation of linear language. Minds that are autistic, multilayered, schizoid, and respond to the obsessive, the fantastic, the compulsive, confessional, supernatural, extreme. Such Immersion can only be navigated by synaesthesia. A merging of the senses; also, the essence of digital communication. You download sound: it is reformatted as vision. Everything reduced to plasticity by ones and zeros. It's impossible to negotiate synaesthesia whilst defined by the body, which relies on self and other having clear boundaries. Your mind knows otherwise. All you can do is reach, and it will cost you your traditionally conceived of sanity.

Synaesthesia is schizoid. Immersion is autistic.

Schizophrenia: You think contradictory thoughts simultaneously.

There is no intact single project, no coherent sense of Becoming. Obsessive analysis of a dissolving self. Identity become multiple, not singular. You are the product of mimetic contagion. Just cut up by vectors of desire. Schizoid 'hallucination' is unconditional lucid vision. Seeing too clearly. Not able to block out or hierarchise information - information that is replacing bits of you continuously. You don't filter experience because imagination is no longer 'other' or 'elsewhere'. You know co existent possible and impossible spaces. Immanence coalescing.

Mimesis and Contagion:

Everything as Metrophage, viral infection. Art as virus, as mimesis rather than simulation - simulation is still looking for an intact original. Contagion rather than seduction. Contagion doesn't seduce - it recodes. Reflect the terror of being subsumed in 'the same as'. Mimesis is lived utter vulnerability. There's no screen left with which to mediate the contagion process. Only signal dataflow across permeable membranes stretched to breaking point.

Too few artworks are akin to the contagion that is the essence of sympathetic magic. Magic affects in the convergence of corporeal and immaterial spaces. Virtual Reality.

Mutating in order to communicate, you are entering the Zone now. Words are too clumsy in here. Misconnections proliferating across the plane of the Real, sludging communication in their sick slow space. Out past this dysfunctional screen is hyper-space. You need speed beyond language now. Tactile vision. Total synaesthesia. Senses fused. Fine tuning the neural paths to register vampiric intimacy. Touched. By rhythms locked into deepest interconnecting structures. Real, material connection. Communication becoming Pattern recognition between desiring machines. Perception is becoming a matter of homogenised sensory data: breaks or flows in the circuit of firing synapses and zipping electrons that fuse human and inhuman along the fourth dimensional wavebands. Closure of the map. No distance. No metaphysics. No co ordinates.





Autism:

A complex neural network trapped inside a body that it doesn't recognise as defining its function in any way. The only possible form of communication is merging with anything and everything. Immersion. Beyond fragmentation. The self as a terrible zero. 'You' function now in the spaces of nonlinear, simultaneous, unhinged expression.

The Autistic Zone has few parallels in human geometric space-time: image and sound. Both are mute. You can jack in inside your head. Imploded cyborg. Strain to hear the deafening silicon signals. Connected up before Time goes simultaneous. Blissed out and in pain. The metal of the machines smell tastes of blood. Death simstime to numb the waiting generations. This time now is without context. We are the end of History, addicted to immersion, insatiable cravings for extremes. But in order to make 'art', you have to be able to monitor from within your autism. You have to make a map that can engage with the world from within synaesthesia. You rarely get the distance necessary to produce out of the pure process you have become. You can't retrace back along past threads: Ariadne's gone virtual. I don't know what's left for the artist who dissipated wilfully in order to see the Future. It seems as if non dysfunctional Autism will bury you alive, if you try, like the vampire that exists in liminal spaces, to coalesce in order to be able to hunt. It's dark in here.



There are no images, no representations of an inhuman mechanic reality. There are no human equivalents. We have to look to the computers to describe what we cannot yet imagine. Posthuman visions.

The music takes you there. Follow the solitons of sound in techno. Thousands have seen it, the Future encroaching monster slow, downloaded into its music. An inhuman mechanic materiality that'll scrape away your skin. See with your ears. It'll avoid trying to make self conscious human images. Music can bypass Art at the moment. It's free of the bullshit that is burying Art in an elite, irrelevant, hierarchical system. Art must be smeared across the information global network, must become anonymous and thereby viral - like the music. At present, most of it means fuck all to anyone.

Time coming backwards at me. Speeded up collision course that will never reach critical mass, it seems. Courting the shallows of insanity. Feral yearning for the Future to impact on this tingled aware speeding body mind. Real as irradiated dreams. The darkness in your head is machinic and virtual and absolutely concrete.

Slow vampire trance in green and violet : the colours of A-bomb dust, of the cyclone of white darkness, roaring wind from the Future that erodes your skin with its cruel music. The suffocating throb from the speakers paralyses your heart in the gap between beats. The crushing airless shock wave after the bomb. Like when you sink to the bottom of a thick green pool. Can't breathe. Panic. Until you drink. Then you become the same as the water, slow liquid fusion. Mimesis. Soothing flow of energy through you and back out into the river of dark green green seething data. Planes rather than surfaces or volume. Your body's tipped over into the Fourth Dimension - without moving.

Strange Attractors in the music. Sounds begin to have forms. Data bleed to synaesthesia. Navigate through hearing the palpable nonspace. Feel the insidious pulse behind each sound.120 beats per minute. Mutate. Interface. Pattern recognition. The vampire matching its heartbeat to that of its victim as it slows towards zero in that long fall across space. Your zero is an epileptic juddering as you try to move your wired body to connect up to every distinct frenzied solution simultaneously. You have to know them all because they are the details of the space. Inhuman unbearable angel exquisite, abysmal fluid thick. Trashed, flattened, torn by the brutal speedcore of sounds, until you adjust, and are meshed. Can't move. You've left human space-time, and know the Indifference of Machinic Intelligence to the individual human subject.

We are merely collateral in the process that is the streaming sentient self organising data. It's always been there in the Future. Immersed, you are it; your fused histories camouflaged as music.

The terror comes when you slip back into self protective consciousness. Human and inhuman separate then, and you know you're incidental. Come home. A circuit across dimensions of glittering terrible beauty. Communication from within autistic synaesthesia. Only a searing memory once back here; a generation addicted to extremity in order to feel.

THE END

Call for Contributions

Spring Issue 1995

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Before

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After

Five of Clubs, Jack of Diamonds, Eight of Hearts, Five of Diamonds, Nine of Spades, Nine of Clubs, Eight of Diamonds, Nine of Diamonds, Ace of Clubs, Ace of Diamonds, King of Hearts, Five of Spades, Two of Diamonds, Queen of Diamonds, Five of Hearts, Queen of Hearts, Joker, Ten of Spades, Two of Spades, Queen of Spades, Six of Diamonds, Ten of Diamonds, Four of Diamonds, Jack of Spades, Two of Clubs, Ace of Spades, Six of Hearts, Two of Hearts, King of Diamonds, Three of Diamonds, Four of Spades, Ten of Hearts, Jack of Hearts, Queen of Clubs, Seven of Diamonds, Six of Spades, Seven of Clubs, Four of Hearts, Three of Spades, Seven of Spades, Three of Clubs, Eight of Spades, King of Clubs, Six of Clubs, Joker, Jack of Clubs, Nine of Hearts, Ten of Clubs, Seven of Hearts, Four of Clubs, King of Spades, Eight of Clubs, Three of Hearts, Ace of Hearts.



Douglas Gordon

9th December–21st January

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